COMMENTARY

NEW YORK'S LOWER EAST SIDE TODAY

Notes and Impressions

DAN WAKEFIELD

THE Garden Cafeteria, across from Seward Park on the Lower East Side of New York, is a crowded, noisy, American-style beanery where customers shove their trays down a chromium counter and are hurriedly dipped out the specials of the day. The Garden is hardly different in outward appearance from a thousand cafeterias from Maine to California, and it is certainly not what Michael Gold had in mind when he closed his classic *Jews without Money* in 1930 by declaring: "O Workers' Revolution. . . . You are the true Messiah. You will destroy the East Side when you come, and build there a garden for the human spirit."

Much of the old East Side Gold wrote about is indeed destroyed, though not by the revolution he had in mind, and the "Garden" across from Seward Park is a refuge not for the human spirit, but rather for much of what remains of the spirit of the old East Side. By default and the chance of location —it is on the same block with the two surviving Jewish daily newspapers, the *Day-Journal* and the *Forward*—the Garden Cafeteria is where the remaining writers, actors, and intelligentsia of the Yiddish cultural world come to talk through the long afternoons and early evenings. The fabled Café Royal, at 12th Street and Second Avenue, has gone for six years now, and gone are the old Russian-Jewish cafés of East Canal Street, described by Hutchins Hapgood in *The Spirit of the Ghetto* as places "where excellent tea and coffee are sold, where everything is clean and good, and where the conversation is often the best." All these amenities have shrunk to several tables at the front of the Garden Cafeteria, and the coffee and tea can claim no distinction from the brews of the Automat.

Though the character and spirit of the Lower East Side have been watered down, like the coffee in the cafeteria, much remains and much has been added. There has never been a neighborhood (or, more strictly speaking, constellation of neighborhoods) in America richer in diversity, poorer in cash, quicker and more dramatic in change and flux, more tempting to describe and more impossible to capture in description than the Lower East Side. This is still the feeling of the observer today, in spite of the fact that the area has less than half the population it had in its most

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SINCE the war, New York's famous Lower East Side has undergone a series of accelerating changes, and DAN WAKEFIELD here gives us some impressions of the emerging new community. Mr. Wakefield is the author of *Island in the City* (1959), a book about New York City's Puerto Ricans. His "Politics and the Puerto Ricans" appeared in our March 1958 issue.

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crowded time. This southeastern tip of Manhattan island, bounded by 14th Street on the north, Broadway on the west, and the East River on the south and east, has been the traditional point of entry for almost every new racial, ethnic, and national group of newcomers to New York City. Into its streets washed the first great tides of immigration: the Irish and Germans in the mid-19th century; the Jews, the Italians, Russians, Hungarians, Greeks, Poles, and Turks from 1880 until restrictive immigration laws were enacted in the 1920's. The area has often been called the "Great Melting Pot," and yet the new groups most often were gathered in ghettos—"Little Italy," Chinatown, "Little Rumania," and largest of all, what Jacob Riis called "Jewtown," and Henry James, in search of delicacy, referred to as "The New Jerusalem." These were walled off by mutual fear, distrust, and hostility, and the real "melting" did not take place until the families had saved enough to move on to other, more "Americanized" neighborhoods in city and suburb.

The greatest of all the ghettos of the Lower East Side was the Jewish. Between 1881 and 1910, 1,562,000 Jews came to America, mostly from Russia and Eastern Europe, and many of them settled on the Lower East Side. They made up the largest portion of the East Side's citizens when the population of the area reached its peak in the 20's with more than 500,000 people. That figure began to decline rapidly when immigration was drastically restricted by the laws of 1922 and 1928, and by 1938 the area had half that number, an estimated 250,000. In the twenty-one years since then the population has continued to drop, but not nearly so sharply as in the first post-immigration years, and today it is some 200,000. Although the movement out has continued, the post-World War II years brought a new movement in, with the latest group to make its start in this neighborhood—the Puerto Ricans. As in other parts of the city, the Puerto Ricans, who range in color from white to black, broke the color barrier in many blocks for the Negroes, and colored people from the South as well as from other parts of the city have also begun to move into the district in increasing numbers.

There are no census breakdowns which tell the new ethnic make-up of the district, and the closest one can come to grasping the extent of the new changes is through the school population. In school districts 1, 2, 3, and 4, on the Lower East Side, Puerto Rican children make up 45 per cent of the students, Negroes 14.1 per cent, and "others" 40.9 per cent. These figures are misleading, however, unless it is borne in mind that the majority of the newest group, the Puerto Ricans, are young people, often with large numbers of children, while the greatest part of the remaining Jewish, Italian, and other European nationality groups are older people, most of whom have already raised their families.

The Lower East Side, as well as remaining a point of entry, is now also a point of return, especially for the Jews who grew up there and have moved their homes but not their roots to other parts of the city and the suburbs. Harry Golden, a graduate of the neighborhood who is proudly referred to now at the University Settlement House as "one of our boys," wrote in *Only in America,* "I receive many sentimental letters from men and women who were raised on the East Side, and I think it is more than nostalgia." Whether it is, as Golden believes, because of the close family ties and the absence of anti-Semitism (unless you wandered into the Italian district) that existed in the old Jewish quarter of the East Side, or whether it is also due to the fact that for the Jews more than for any of the other groups the East Side was not just a slum but a center of culture, the old-timers do indeed feel a strong loyalty to the neighborhood. If there were unattractive elements in it, there were also many things worthy of preserving, for here occurred the flowering of Yiddish literature, theater, and journalism.

As the old-timers come back to shop in the markets of Orchard Street, or to eat the blintzes and sour cream of Ratner's, so others come to the Garden Cafeteria to sit in on the long discussions of literature and life.

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The newspapermen from the *Forward* and the *Day-Journal* come—and they are not merely "newspapermen," but, in the great tradition of the Yiddish press, more often scholars as well as journalists. They are men like Meyer Stiker, city editor of the *Day-Journal*; who translated *The Wasteland* into Yiddish, or Isaac Bashevis Singer, one of the country's outstanding short story writers (cited last month by the National Institute of Arts and Letters) who is also a staff reporter on the *Daily Forward*. And the poets and critics come—some, like A. Tabachnik, who have moved uptown, but come here to meet with what is probably the last, and now aging, generation of the Yiddish intelligentsia.

A recent Friday afternoon this spring at the Garden found nearly a dozen of these men pressed around two tables at the front of the cafeteria. They are men with gray hair or no hair at all, and their faces are expressive of the wisdom not only of books but of a life recast in a new culture, and the struggle to survive in it and still maintain the old. Among those present were the poet-critic Tabachnik, the poet Jeremiah Ashesheles, and J. J. Schwartz, a heavily black-browed man who once wrote a 250-page epic poem which told the story of a Jewish peddler who went to Kentucky, and which went through three printings and sold over 5,000 copies.

THE Yiddish audience of course is narrowing now with each year—the newspapers count on an annual percentage of loss by deaths that will not be replaced—but still these men write on in the language that their sons and grandsons are forgetting or have already forgotten. Tabachnik was saying that he had just brought out the first issue of a new Yiddish literary quarterly, *Wogshol* (The Scales). When asked what kind of audience it had, he answered, "I tell you the truth—we read each other. We sold about 300 copies of this issue. Few Yiddish readers are left, but there are some in every part of the world. The other day I got a letter about the quarterly from a Jew in Sweden.

"From 1910 to now we have a great body of Yiddish poetry," Tabachnik explained, "a great literature that grew up here in America, on the East Side, that hardly anyone knows about. When the Jews disappear from the East Side, this work will still stand—people will finally discover it and study it. The Yiddish poet H. Leivick is the greatest poet in the last twenty years. About four or five months before MacLeish published *J.B.*, Leivick published a long poem called *In The Days of Job*. I wish you could read them both and see which has the most poetry.

"We have lived with the poetry of all America. People don't know that. People think the East Side is only interested in itself—but we're concerned with the world. People come to us to find gefilte fish . . ."

A companion, smiling, interrupted: "But they find T. S. Eliot instead."

Tabachnik nodded vigorously, and leaned closer over the table to say, "Our children, our grandchildren are a little ashamed of us. I wish they knew these things. Someday, when we're all dead, this literature will be discovered."

A man in a brown workshirt stopped by the table and tapped the shoulder of Moshe Duchovney, who works for Israel Bonds and writes literary columns for the *Day-Journal*: "Duchovney," the man said, "you ought to leave Pasternak alone," and, shaking his head, walked off into the crowd.

The particular kind of community sense which reached a peak at the Café Royal exists, in the shrunken Yiddish literary world that is left, at the Garden Cafeteria. The reader knows the writer and the writer the reader; the writer is a dignitary who is seen as well as read, and the ambiance resulting is the closest America has come to the European literary milieu in which the "mandarins" are seen in certain spots, and are known by sight to their followers and fans. What exists now of course is but a remnant of the spirit that pervaded the storied days of the Café Royal. Not only the Yiddish writers of the East Side forgathered there, and Jewish intellectuals from all over the world who made it a rendezvous when they were in New York, but leaders of life from outside

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the Yiddish world—Lincoln Steffens, Sherwood Anderson, Teddy Roosevelt, Jimmy O'Dwyer, as well as mayors, judges, and politicians from around the city who liked to be seen there before election times.

With only what tables can be snatched at the Garden left to serve the purpose of the old, European-style cafés, much of the life of the East Side's Yiddish intelligentsia has retreated to the bookstores—and even they are now rapidly declining. Only this spring the most famous of them all, down the block from the Garden Cafeteria on East Broadway, died with the death of its owner, Max Jankowitz. Jankowitz came to New York at the turn of the century and made a name for himself as the first man to translate Dostoevsky into Yiddish. His store is closed and bolted now, the books still stacked inside, the window still displaying what it had for so long: the books, the fading picture of Theodor Herzl, the Jerusalem *Post,* and the prayer-shawls and religious items which it is said that Jankowitz, an atheist, grudgingly displayed and considered "his compromise." He is dead but a month or so, and already the myth has settled around him (the world he belonged to lives in no small measure on its myths now), the story being that he rose from his sickbed, got dressed, and came to the bookstore, where he died, surrounded by his life.

There are other bookstores remaining in the neighborhood—though none with the heavy history of Jankowitz's, where Emma Goldmann and other famous figures used to come. These bookstores serve as a meeting place for itinerant rabbis, Talmudic scholars, and Yiddish writers who are, as one East Sider put it, "the last of the real bohemians," living as best they can for the learning that is their passion, finding temporary means of supporting themselves. And even if they are not "the last of the real bohemians," they are surely the eldest; J. J. Schwartz was on the road from the Lower East Side to Kentucky long before J. Kerouac began his wanderings.

The writers most often have found their outlet in the Yiddish press, which has traditionally been oriented toward literature as well as news; indeed, the intellectual debates and serialized fiction often are the most exciting news to the readers. The spirit of these papers is best summed up in the story told about the man who was reading his Yiddish paper, and was asked by a stranger what the big headline was that went clear across the page in bold type. "It says," the reader translated, "Was Spinoza Right?"

WHEN the East Side reached its peak of population in the 20's, so did the Yiddish press; there were at the end of that decade a half-dozen dailies, and a number of other weeklies and less frequently published papers in Yiddish. This was the time when the *Forward* hit its peak with a quarter of a million readers. From then on the number of papers and their readers have steadily declined, in a series of collapses and mergers that have left the *Day-Journal* and the *Forward* as the main Yiddish dailies still publishing. The Communist *Freiheit* still hangs on, but only with a few thousand readers. The last of the mergers, in 1953, united the *Morning Journal* and the *Day,* and the hope of the joint management was that the combined readership would total around 95,000. The overlap of readers, however, was even greater than they had anticipated, and the combination could claim only 78,000 readers. This figure has already fallen to 65,000 in six years. Although impossible to calculate exactly, the overlap of readers is also probably great between today's *Day-Journal* and its only rival, the *Daily Forward,* which claims 80,000.

Many things may have changed in policies and attitudes on both the remaining papers, but the traditional formula of the Yiddish press is still adhered to—the combination of serial thrillers, philosophic discourses, news of the doings of the *Landsmanschaften* (the groups of countrymen who came here from the same town or region in Europe), Yiddish translations of the world classics, and the ever popular *Bintel-brief* (advice to the lovelorn and lonely hearts). The main new element stressed now in both papers is news from Israel. The *Day-Journal* has a weekly column

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by David Ben Gurion himself, and regular coverage of the country by a full-time correspondent. The *Daily Forward,* which originally was anti-Zionist, now has three Israeli correspondents and is as avidly pro-Israel as its competitor.

Hillel Rogoff, editor in chief of the *Forward,* sat in his office this spring with the naked lines of the many new housing projects blooming in the windows around him, and speculated that "the Jews, in time, will come back to the East Side—though it won't be the way it was before. It's being rebuilt all the time; it's more 'American' now." The circulation of both the Yiddish dailies, once highly concentrated on the Lower East Side, is scattered now throughout the five boroughs of New York City, Long Island, and across the country and the world. "We have Jewish articles from all the big cities now," Mr. Rogoff explained, "Philadelphia, Chicago, all of them; and even regular columns from some of the cities."

As for the yearly shrinkage of Yiddish readers, Mr. Rogoff said, "We hope there may be a renewal of the language through the Yiddish schools. Many parents are sending their children to school to learn Yiddish now." But that hope must remain a small one in the face of the cold reality of the circulation figures. However, the readers that remain are fanatically faithful. Arthur Jacobs, general manager of the *Day-Journal,* says: "We raised our price from five cents to seven cents six years ago, and we got all kinds of letters from readers saying that if we needed to make it ten cents or even a quarter a day, that was all right, but to please keep the paper going."

Even in the face of the inevitable decline, the Yiddish papers have fared much better than the other foreign-language papers of the old East Side immigrants. The four or five Italian language papers have been distilled to the single daily, *Il Progresso,* which has roughly 50,000 readers. But despite the passionate loyalty they command, the Yiddish papers face not only a shrinking audience to read them but a shrinking staff to write them. The youngest of the staff members are in their forties; as Arthur Jacobs explained, the younger men naturally want a career with a future, in the English press. The men who remain are justly proud, not only of their past, but of the work they do today; yet they know that it is part of a world that is passing. A veteran of the Yiddish press who was telling a friend of the great traditions and the fine work still going on, finally ended by saying, "But when all's said and done, it's like being at a funeral now."

THE funeral bell has been tolling long and loud for another once-great part of the East Side cultural world—the Yiddish theater—although the actors refuse to hear it. The Yiddish theater was founded in Roumania in 1876, spread through Eastern Europe, and then was banned in Russia in 1884; it subsequently reached its greatest heights on the Lower East Side of New York. The first Yiddish theater in America, the Oriental, opened in a former Bowery music hall. Others grew quickly, and in a short space of time the Yiddish theater was an institution, with its own stars, its own repertoires, and its own passionate audience, which, like the audience of the Yiddish papers, cut across intellectual and economic class lines. There were original plays and musicals about the world of the ghetto, and also revampings of classics—such as the Yiddish *Hamlet,* in which the Prince of Denmark is off being educated as a rabbi and a jealous rival tries to prove that he is actually a nihilist and has him sent to Siberia.

The theaters were customarily reserved for clubs of *Landsmanschaften,* guilds, and assorted groups who made block reservations on the first four nights of the week, while the weekends were left for individual tickets. A current devotee of this art remarked recently with scorn that one of the reasons that the Yiddish theater is dying is that Jewish groups and clubs no longer support it: "A Jewish woman's club today reserves its block of theater tickets for *The World of Suzie Wong.*"

The first death knell for the Yiddish theater was heard as early as the first years of the century, when an observer wrote that the

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great Yiddish actors "feel not only the weight of the commercial spirit, but also the imminent death of their stage. For the Jews of the ghetto as they become Americanized are liable to lose their instinctive Yiddish, and then there will be no more drama in that tongue." But more than a half-century later the death knells are still tolling and the Yiddish theater, though greatly diminished, is still performing. In an article last year in the New York *Times,* Murray Schumach described the last rehearsals for the last play in the last Yiddish theater—the National—which was doomed by new construction on the subway at Second Avenue. Schumach reported the nostalgia with which the small band of actors recalled the great past, and the hopelessness of the future of their stage. But although the National indeed has come down, the Hebrew Actors Union is planning now for next season, which will see Yiddish plays put on in the Phyllis Anderson Theater, and the halls of the Educational Alliance and the *Forward.* When a drama critic of the Yiddish press was asked recently if he knew about a meeting of the Hebrew Actors Guild this winter which reportedly discussed the survival of the Yiddish theater, he smiled and explained, "It could have been any meeting of the Union; that subject is a permanent part of the agenda."

MEANWHILE, as the old dies, much new is being born on the East Side—often within the very walls of the old. No more appropriate name could have been chosen for the first off-Broadway theater to come to the Lower East Side than the Phoenix, which arose in the old Jewish National Folk Theater, built across from the Café Royal at 12th Street and Second Avenue in 1927. The Phoenix was opened in 1953, and soon afterward a rash of other, smaller theaters grew up around it in the neighborhood, in converted lofts, former movie theaters, and revamped basement apartments, until today "Off Broadway" means the Lower East Side as much as it means Greenwich Village.

The East Side, in fact, has in many ways taken the place of the Village as the haven for artists, writers, and actors, and the geographic home of the New York avant-garde in painting, theater, literature, and jazz. Roughly concurrent with the outbreak of theaters on the East Side was a proliferation of small, cooperative art galleries on and around East Tenth Street, and, soon after, the opening of many coffee houses. Within one tumbledown block on East Fifth Street, squeezed between tenements, Chinese laundries, and barber shops, are the hopefully exotic and candle-lit cafés called Hassan's, the Port Afrique, and, after its Parisian namesake, the Deux Magots. Garbed in the native regalia of the Beat, young poets and aspirants of the arts assemble there in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons for poetry readings, sometimes to jazz accompaniment. In addition, the neighborhood has one of the more far-out jazz rooms in the city in the Five Spot on Cooper Square. Folksinger Jimmy McDonald, who lives on the Lower East Side, says proudly, "some of the greatest jazz men going live down here now—Sonny Rollins, Cecil Taylor, lots of 'em are down here."

The new cultural flurry on the East Side is not, of course, a natural outgrowth of the neighborhood, the work of the people living there, as Yiddish culture was. It is rather the result of a growing exodus of bohemians from Greenwich Village, which has, with its rising rents and supersized new apartment buildings, become too expensive and middle class for the starving or even semi-starving artist.

The culture that these new artistic immigrants have brought across Broadway to the East Side is largely avant-garde, and bears no more and no less relation to the neighborhood around it than the work of Edna St. Vincent Millay bore to the Italian immigrants of the Greenwich Village that she and they inhabited in the 20's. The Yiddish artistic culture that came out of the people who lived on the old East Side, and was read, watched, and listened to by them, is a phenomenon that seems unlikely to recur. The genuine, unpretentious quality that it seemed to have perhaps was due to its being

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a natural part of the world around it. Nothing could be farther from the self-conscious social aspects of the new East Side culture. Hassan's Café, with its Arab-garbed waiters, Israeli folk songs on the hi-fi, Chinese lanterns, and European travel posters, is not, as the Café Royal was, a place where Teddy Roosevelt would have gone.

THE work of the artists, writers, and musicians who live on the East Side now cannot of course be typed by the tastes in decoration of the café proprietors who happen to be in the same neighborhood. The new East Side bohemia is, like all bohemias, compounded of many parts phony to many parts true, many hangers-on as well as many real creators. And this bohemia perhaps more than others is impossible honestly to type as a "movement" or "school" in any of its areas of creativity. Probably the greatest activity is going on in art, and the colony of painters and little galleries that have multiplied on and around East Tenth Street has already been branded as the "Tenth Street Movement," though the artists involved respond that it is just a place to work and not a "movement" in the traditional sense of the word. Since its beginning, which might be formally dated by the opening of the first of the now dozen or so little galleries in the area—the Tanager—in 1952, it has grown in size and notoriety, not only among other artists, but as of this past year, among writers, critics, and journalists who have photographed it, talked about it, analyzed it, and interpreted it. In an article in the current *Art News Yearbook* Harold Rosenberg, who himself lives on East Tenth Street, writes that "Tenth Street . . . draws on deeper sources than the negative sociability of the West Coast Hangout literature (Kerouac, Beat, etc.) with its generation propaganda. For on Tenth Street, the individual prevails against the band and it is to him that art there owes its inspiration and vocabulary . . . The absence from Tenth Street of fixed group identities, whether of nationality, race, class, ideology, or age is one of the superiorities of this colony and its novelty . . . Tenth Street is the opposite of a community. . . ."

Rosenberg is better qualified than other writers to talk about Tenth Street, but many have and many more will, and it perhaps was in the uneasy knowledge of the new notoriety that the latest analysis of Tenth Street was made by the artists themselves. Early this year the Artists Club, which occupies a loft in the neighborhood and includes almost all the artists of the area, had as the topic for one of its Friday night meetings: "Tenth Street — Self-Portrait." Representatives from five of the small co-op galleries made up the panel, and restated their opposition to the idea of a "movement."

The co-op galleries started by the artists in the neighborhood came into being, John Krushenick said, "Because the majority of us didn't want to sit in garrets waiting to be discovered. The fact that the galleries are centered around the same block makes it easier to see the other artists' work. The original idea was merely for a place to show—none of us had any axes to grind."

When the moderator, Irving Sandler, asked the panelists what they felt about "the nature of the artists' community," Sam Goodman answered, "When the Tanager appeared, this was just a cheap rent area with lofts, and when the Camino opened, others followed and it seems to have grown into a 'movement.' It's a vital situation." But as to the nature of the "movement," Goodman felt that its only common denominator was "vitality."

It seemed to be commonly agreed that the great advantage to this "movement" was that it had no fixed rules or formulas. "So there's no set purpose," one painter said, "that's fine—the writers will tell us what we're doing. I think it's good that we *don't* know why we're here."

The evening was climaxed by the reading of a poem by Phil Littlefield entitled "Murder on Tenth Street," which opened with the declaration: *"We don't have to do what we don't want to do / Or do what we*

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already know . . ." And ended with the explanation that the "Murder on Tenth Street" was the "death of a fixed idea."

The applause was long and loud.

No one can say how long the Tenth Street colony will flourish, but everyone realizes that it, like so much that has flowered in this most surprising slum, is doomed to destruction, at least geographically. As Rosenberg wrote in his essay, "The artists' Tenth Street will not deteriorate; it will be extinguished. It will be swallowed up in the yawn of a steam shovel. Its future is—an excavation."

THAT has been the fate of so much that gave the East Side its special flavor—markets, restaurants, lofts, and tenements—all have been shoveled up to make room for new city and co-op housing projects, especially in the past decade, and the old residents have repeatedly been dispersed. But the ebb and flow of the human tides that continue to move in and out of the lower East Side have their causes in more than just the physical dislocation caused by the widespread bulldozing. The single greatest change in the area has been the coming in of massive numbers of Puerto Ricans. Many have come through assignment to city housing projects. The three-year-old LaGuardia Houses, at Rutgers and Madison Streets, have a residential make-up of 45 per cent Puerto Rican, 20 per cent Negro, 20 per cent Jewish, and the rest a mixture of other groups. But aside from the projects, many of the Puerto Ricans have come to the East Side for the same reason that brought the artists in—the low rents of the tenements. Unlike the other foreign language groups, the Puerto Ricans have scattered throughout the East Side instead of forming a little ghetto within it. The signs of the pentecostal churches, *Iglesias de Dios;* the groceries, *Bodegas;* and the small shops that sell the herbs and prescriptions for the work of the spiritualists, *Botanicas,* are visible throughout the entire area.

Although they have gone to no particular section, many of the blocks that these latest newcomers settled in quickly become largely Puerto Rican. For here in the oldest slum in the nation, as well as in the middle-class white communities across the country, the phenomenon of "block-tipping" is a force of dispersion. An East Side social worker estimates that when any one block becomes "about 35 per cent Puerto Rican or Negro, the whites move out."

The reaction of many of the old Jewish residents to the Puerto Ricans has been the stereotyped one of fear, uneasiness, and misinformation that so often greeted their own people. One Jewish housewife born in the neighborhood who lives on East Sixth Street explained: "It's not the same neighborhood now. This block is all right, but you just walk a block over to Avenue A and you're in a different world. And they're so clannish. The old merchants, a lot of them, learned Spanish, but when the Puerto Ricans got so strong they got their own shops in. Why, there's not an English-speaking barber-shop within blocks of here. Where did the Jews go? Out to Forest Hills. Anyway, as I say, on this block it's still all right, but in the mornings you hear them walking across from Avenue A, and then again when they come home at night you hear them, all speaking Spanish, all at once, going by right under your window. We've got to move, at least for our daughters' sake. It's got so you don't dare go out alone at night. Why, when I was a little girl you wouldn't have thought a thing about walking by yourself. That's how much it's changed."

The lady's husband lit a cigar and gruffly said, "Aw, it was the same thing then, you just didn't know it cause you were a girl. The things I seen, I sometimes wonder if I really lived through them. I seen guys holding up guys in broad daylight—guys who were friends of theirs. I was lookin' on once when this guy I know holds up this friends of ours and the friend says I gotta be a witness and I tell him I didn't see a thing. That's how I lived so long. I remember once this fella Louie (later on they shot him down in the street) comes up to this car which is driven by Davey, and he stops

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him and says, 'Davey, I'm takin' over.' See, Davey has about eight tins of gin in the car—he's bottleggin' then—and he has to get out and Louie says, 'Davey, walk,' and Davey walks and Louie drives off with the gin. By the way, this Davey, you'd never believe it, but he made a lot of dough and today he's gotten very pious—goes to synagogue all the time, holds the holidays, everything. Things change, you see."

Things indeed change. Many of the Jewish residents who have chosen to stay and accept the Puerto Ricans as neighbors have learned Spanish; some shopkeepers who never found it necessary for their business in this neighborhood to learn to speak English are now bi-lingual—in Yiddish and Spanish. All have picked up the most vital words and phrases, and it is not unusual to walk down Orchard street and watch a *schlepper* (puller-in) grab the sleeve of a Puerto Rican lady and say, "So come in and look around—*bueno*, everything *bueno*."

Some of the old Jewish residents are not only willing to stay on the new East Side, but are determined not to leave it. A not untypical story is the one told of the synagogue at Madison and Montgomery streets which stands on municipal property and was recently condemned by the city. The congregation was aged and small, and the building itself was in such a state of disrepair that the worshipers met for their services in the basement. When the city condemned the building the rabbi called together the faithful and announced that he would hold twenty-four-hour prayer services until the city promised to let them stay—and the city, at last report, has relented.

The hold of the East Side is a strong one; its folklore has always been full of tales of those "traitors" who left and then, seeing the error of their ways, came back. A famous Yiddish musical called *Attorney Street* told the story of a Jew who left the East Side for upstate and returned to sing, to the cheers of the audience:

Hooray Jews, I'm very happy,
I came back to Attorney Street.

And indeed there is a new "remigration" today of Jews who left the neighborhood when they moved up the economic scale and have now returned—not to Attorney Street, but to the middle-income housing projects and co-ops, like those built by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Those who come back today find an East Side that is probably less ghettoized than ever before in its history—at least partly because of the way the Puerto Ricans have settled throughout the neighborhood. Not only streets but institutions in the area which were formerly all of one ethnic composition now include Spanish-speaking residents as well. The famous Educational Alliance, on East Broadway, one of the centers of Yiddish life, now has classes in Spanish, and early this year formed an "International Club" which sponsored as its first event, this May, a "Carribbean Festival." The flyers notifying the neighborhood of the event were printed in English, Spanish, and Yiddish.

THE strongest force for cooperation among the more than forty ethnic or national groups living in the neighborhood today is an organization born of the problems and hopes of the new East Side: the Lower East Side Neighborhoods Association (referred to locally as LENA). Its purpose is nothing less ambitious than to unite all the social, civic, and religious groups in the area into one body that works for common goals.

The East Side has traditionally been a center of social experimentation—usually by necessity. It had the first mass-occupancy tenements, and also the first settlement houses—the Henry Street Settlement, University Settlement, and others which drew world-wide attention in their effort to create better conditions for slum dwellers. In the early 50's, with the area undergoing new and complicated changes, whose over-all scope was too great to be dealt with by any one institution, the East Side brought

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forth LENA to meet the new challenges. The sudden increase in the new Puerto Rican and Negro population had resulted in outbreaks of teenage gang activity in the traditional pattern: the old residents resenting the "intruders" and ganging up against them, the newcomers forming their own gangs in self-defense. One day a little girl who was being chased by a gang ran into the Henry Street Settlement for refuge. When her mother came to get the frightened child she told Helen Hall, the director of the settlement, that she was going to take her family and move to Harlem because "it's much safer there." The declaration dramatically pointed up the state things had reached on the Lower East Side, and Miss Hall decided it was time for the neighborhood to do something about its new problems —of which the gang troubles were only one part; she called together some of the veteran neighborhood leaders to discuss what might be done. Out of their discussions came the formation of the Lower East Side Neighborhoods Association.

LENA came into its first real prominence in 1956 when its leaders helped mediate one of the worst outbreaks of teenage gang violence in the recent history of the East Side. But juvenile delinquency is only one of its areas of activity. Today, nearly 100 cooperating agencies, and citizens from all sections of the population are working together in LENA on problems of housing, health, education, and employment. It has enriched the cultural life of the area with such programs as its summer "Evenings by the River" concerts at an amphitheater on the East River which had been unused for twenty years.

One of LENA'S most important objectives is to try to preserve the neighborhood from being bulldozed away into one massive public housing project. Charles Cook, director of the University Settlement and co-chairman of LENA, explained recently: "By massing public housing we've massed our social problems. We don't want the city to build all its public housing down here—by building more of it on the Lower East Side they're going to 'build in' a slum for the next three generations. We want a balanced community. We have the highest hopes that by mixing income levels we can have integration that will really work."

The Reverend David Romig, minister of the Presbyterian Church of the Sea and Land, which has two storefront churches and one of traditional structure in the neighborhood, is himself a member of LENA. Rev. Romig says, "We want mixed income housing, but we also want to retain the spirit of the old East Side. We want to have some 'vest-pocket' low income projects besides the middle income buildings, instead of just making it all one thing. We want the people who have their roots here to be able to stay, and we want to preserve the old markets that still are left instead of having some modern shopping center that's just another chrome-and-neon monstrosity."

THE planning against the "bulldozer" future is being carried on by the four neighborhood councils of which LENA is composed—the Two Bridges Council, One Mile Council, Tompkins Square Council, and Good Neighbor Council. A recent meeting of the Good Neighbor Council, held in the community center of the LaGuardia Houses on Madison Street, heard a description of a neighborhood "renewal" plan worked out by the Two Bridges Council, which is in the area next to the Good Neighbor territory. The Good Neighbor Council, like the others, is composed of social workers and citizens of the area; the names of the members of its executive board give some indication of the new cooperation that is taking place among the formerly ghettoized groups of the Lower East Side: Julius Miller, Narcisa Cruz, Louis Berkowitz, Hugh Johnson, Ferrucio Ferruci, Jack Martin, Howard Latzen, and Stella Shepard.

When the meeting opened, Jack Martin of the health committee distributed leaflets to be handed out through the area announcing the times that free polio shots would be given ("Polio Must Go on the Lower East Side!") and Suzanne Louchard,

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a social worker from the Henry Street Settlement, announced that the Tenants' Association she was working with at the LaGuardia Houses was going the next morning to a meeting of the City Planning Commission to protest the widening of Montgomery Street for use as a truck route.

Milton Pulakos, a social worker from the Hamilton-Madison House and one of the drafters of the neighborhood renewal plan, explained that the Two Bridges Council had been working on the plan since September. "We felt that if we didn't plan ourselves, someone would come in with a bulldozer and that would be all. We wanted to keep the indigenous population and also improve the community." Mr. Pulakos went over the details of the plan, and when he finished there was a loud protest from Mrs. Stella Shepard. Stella Shepard has lived in the neighborhood all her life, and experience has made her mistrustful of high hopes for community improvement.

"Those are nice fancy words about relocation," she said. "I've heard those words before and I've been relocated three times. And I had to do it myself. We're not interested in lovely middle-income homes because we couldn't afford them. We'd just be kicked out, and we're tired of being kicked around. All we want is a place that's livable where we can pay the rent, and stay in this neighborhood where we have our roots."

Louis Berkowitz pointed out that one of the main gaps in the plan—and in most of the plans of the past—was that "there are two kinds of people it doesn't handle: single persons under sixty living by themselves who aren't allowed into public housing but can't afford the co-ops; and also the families with many children that aren't eligible for public and don't have enough money for co-op housing."

When the business of the meeting was over, Narcisa Cruz, the council's co-chairman, who is one of the most active Puerto Rican leaders in the neighborhood, said that she had a special announcement to make: she was going to have to resign from the council because she had to move from the community.

"I have eight children," she explained, "five of my own and three nieces I take care of. I can't get anything in the projects, and the private apartments don't want to hear about me. The place I'm in just isn't room enough for all of us to live. I don't want to leave the neighborhood—I love the work I'm doing here; but there's nothing else to do. I'm going to try to find something outside the city, maybe in New Jersey."

It was quiet for a moment and then Stella Shepard raised her voice to say, "Why don't we make them take her in here at LaGuardia Houses?"

Mrs. Cruz said she had been trying for four years to get into a public project, but with no success.

Julius Miller suggested that the Council should send a delegation to see the local assemblyman about getting Mrs. Cruz a place in the neighborhood.

"I already saw him," Mrs. Cruz said.

"Well," a voice shouted from the back, "we'll *all* go to see him."

"That's right," said another, "We can't afford to lose people like this."

The meeting slowly broke up, small groups gathering together, some going up to tell Mrs. Cruz that they would all put the pressure on to try to find her a place in the neighborhood.

There is a spirit on the new East Side that has discovered the bulldozer—the impersonal forces of change and dispersion—as the common enemy, rather than the neighbor who speaks a different language. It is a spirit that hopes to preserve what is worth preserving from the past and to work for a future that will mean better days for these neighbors who are, in their efforts, building from our oldest ghetto our newest community.

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GATEWAY TO THE COLLEGES

An Examination of the College Entrance Board

SPENCER BROWN

Men of the woods and lumberjacks,
They judged me by their appropriate tool.
Except as a fellow handled an axe
They had no way of knowing a fool.

—Robert Frost
"Two Tramps in Mud Time"

NOT the least of problems in American education is the question of who may or should go to college. The question is answered, for any particular youngster, by such considerations as his school marks, his family's bank account, his health, his social "maturity," his athletic skill or extra-curricular "leadership," his name and ancestry, and his ability to do well on certain kinds of examinations. This last is generally more important than any of the others. A rapidly increasing number of colleges and universities require examinations, and in a few years almost all will require them.

The examinations are constructed, administered, and graded by the College Entrance Examination Board. The College Board, as it is usually called, has been since 1948 part of Educational Testing Services, a supergalaxy embracing almost all the known universe of testing. ETS examines candidates for secondary schools, law schools, medical schools, the Coast Guard Academy, and graduate schools; it examines anaesthetists, pupils in Lutheran high schools, obstetricians, and surgeons. It sets the Selective Service College Qualification Test, used to determine draft deferments. It experiments with tests for personality and tolerance; for aptitude and vocation for the ministry; and for measurement of general ability and mastery of specific information in schools and colleges. Though it is somewhat inaccurate to speak of ETS and the College Board as if they were the same organization, it is convenient and usual. Their directorates are firmly interlocking, their philosophy and practice identical. And it is the older organization, the College Board, which tests over 650,000 students for admission to college and over a half million competitors for the big national scholarships.

The Board began in 1900 as a committee set up by a group of Eastern colleges to bring order out of the chaos of college requirements and examinations. Presidents Charles Eliot of Harvard and Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia were its leading proponents. But would colleges lose their independence of choice? At a meeting of college presidents, one unlucky soul, Warfield of Lafayette, objected: "Lafayette College does not intend to be told by any Board whom to admit and whom not to admit. If we wish to admit the son of a benefactor, or of a trustee, or of a member of the faculty, and such action will benefit the institution, we are not going to be prevented from taking it."

He was answered by Eliot, who secured unanimous approval for establishing the Board, with these remarks: "The College

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THE nation-wide, machine-scored College Board examinations have come to exercise a dominant role in the admission of students to the colleges. SPENCER BROWN here raises the important question as to what standards of education these tests imply. Mr. Brown, who is a teacher of English at the Fieldston School in New York City, has previously appeared in our pages with "Dr. Flesch's Cure for Reading Troubles" (August 1955), "How Educate the Gifted Child?" (June 1956), and "Have Our Schools Failed?" (June 1958). He is now at work on a book on education to be issued by Random House. Mr. Brown has also had a volume of verse published, "My Father's Business and Other Poems" (1956).

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Entrance Examination Board, if constituted, is not to admit students to any college, but so to define the subjects of admission that they will be uniform, to conduct examinations in these subjects at uniform times throughout the world, and to issue to those who take the examinations certificates of performance—good, bad, and indifferent. And, President Warfield, it will be perfectly practicable under this plan for Lafayette College to say, if it chooses, that it will admit only such students as cannot pass these examinations. No one proposes to deprive Lafayette College of that privilege."

What the admissions policies of Lafayette College were in the early decades of this century I can only guess, but otherwise Eliot's words proved remarkably prophetic for the course of the College Board until the depression. The Board began small and grew and prospered steadily. Those of us who remember college preparatory courses in high schools thirty years ago can attest to the respect for, if not fear of, Board requirements and examinations. This respect came only from applicants to a handful of Eastern colleges. Yet these were the colleges of highest intellectual and social prestige, and thus the Board was in its narrow way influential.

Of its narrowness there can be no question. In "preparatory" schools—public or, more often, private schools a majority of whose students were headed for "Board colleges"—the curriculum and even the syllabus for the individual course were rigidly attuned to Board specifications. A physics student who was curious about Rutherford's work on the atom would almost certainly be told: "Don't worry; it won't be on the Board exam." In plane geometry a standard list of Euclid's propositions had to be memorized in order—two-thirds of the examination was devoted to prepared proofs, one-third to "originals." A well-drilled student with no sense of geometry was thus guaranteed a passing grade. An ill-drilled mathematical whiz probably would not get a high mark and might even fail.

In the senior year of English, the syllabus consisted *only* of *Macbeth* or *Hamlet,* Burke *On Conciliation* or Macaulay's *Life of Johnson,* Carlyle's essay on Burns or Arnold's on Wordsworth,* selections from Burns or Wordsworth, and three of Milton's minor poems. In earlier years *Henry V, Silas Marner,* and the de Coverley papers from the *Spectator* were similar iron-clad stipulations. Students in successful prep schools and cram schools read these works (and nothing else), outlined them, memorized them, but rarely analyzed them critically or entered into them emotionally. When a student of mine nowadays happens on *Silas Marner,* he enjoys its tenderness, its irony, its symbolism, and its clear structure. But to anyone who went through the old school, *Silas Marner* seems in retrospect unendurable: the novel is not strong enough to support the kind of literal study and outlining necessary for a good grade on the old English examination.

Requirements in the sciences (certain prescribed experiments, certain approved texts), history, and languages were similarly rigid. The examinations, in their narrow way, were scrupulously fair, and teacher and student who played the Board's game were duly rewarded. The Board, in the first half of its existence, took very seriously its responsibility as arbiter of the intellectual life of the high school. And though high school and college teachers attacked the Board for its rigidity, nobody wanted it to abdicate its position. Everybody wanted freedom to experiment; but nobody wanted to do away with standards of knowledge and skill.

IN THE past thirty years all this has changed. The Board has enormously, unbelievably increased its size and power (its 230 member colleges and universities award 70 per cent of all professional degrees and 90 per cent of all graduate degrees). It has broadened its activities but abandoned its require-

*I was an Arnold man myself. If I had suffered under a Carlyle teacher, I might have a more vivid affection for the poem enshrined in *The Book of Boners:* "As I was laying on the green / A small English book I seen. / Carlyle's essay on Burns was the edition / So I left it lay in the same position."

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ments; and it paradoxically spends a considerable part of its extensive information services and public relations activities in denying its influence. Such modesty may be part of the pattern of giant American corporations—as if General Motors or U. S. Steel should say (and sometimes they do say), "Shucks, fellows, we're just an everyday outfit making things out of metal and trying to sell them."

But the Board's modesty is distinctly one-sided. Its tests, it says, are excellent, and it is constantly working to improve them and to devise new ones for new areas of endeavor. But it merely tests. It has no other function and no wish to prescribe courses of study to the schools whose students it measures. It does not judge the students. It measures them and lets the colleges judge.

One cause of the Board's transformation must have been the breaking of the intellectual monopoly once enjoyed by a few Eastern colleges. (For connoisseurs of cultural irony, this development seems to have followed closely on the breaking of the football monopoly of the same colleges; when Michigan and Minnesota ousted Harvard and Yale as nurses of All-American teams, West began to rival East intellectually.) The population as well as the number of colleges expanded enormously in the 20's, and no longer could the colleges exist on students from the Eastern prep schools alone, whose expensive cramming miracles the public schools could never match. The trend began, and continues today at an accelerated rate, of sending more (soon it will be most) public high school students to college.

The depression, too, must have played a part in the great change. Colleges had overexpanded in the 20's, and even the old-line institutions were forced, in order to keep running, to dip below the once-sacred passing mark of 60 per cent to get students who could pay. Concomitantly with the depression came the impact of progressive education, first felt in the high schools in the 30's. Its liberalization of the curriculum, its experimentation with new courses and the uncompartmented curriculum, and its delight in crusade and polemic, all weakened the Board's structure of requirements.*

With World War II, the development of techniques for mass testing and the need for mass testing arrived simultaneously. Having concocted ways of measuring "scholastic aptitude," or verbal and mathematical skill, the College Board was ready to measure millions of young men for the armed services. In 1942 the Board junked all the tests except its newly developed Scholastic Aptitude Test. It replaced the three-hour tests by one-hour tests, reduced its examination week to one day, turned its staff of readers (high school and college teachers eager to earn a little extra money at the end of the year) out to pasture, and replaced them with machines—for the new tests were scored by machines needing only clerical attendants.

After the war, with the colleges inundated by returning veterans, mass testing remained necessary. The war-baby examinations, in consequence, have continued. They are still scored by machine; the emphasis is still primarily on scholastic aptitude rather than on specific subject matter; and, since about 1950, there has been added a vast and growing competition for national scholarships, awarded largely on the basis of tests. Simultaneously, the pressure of many more applicants on college admissions offices—and the understandable wish of the officers to take summer vacations—has moved the ex-

*A powerful movement for liberalization (or, if you are captious, dilution) of requirements for college admission took shape in what was called the Eight-Year Study or the Thirty-School Experiment. In this experiment, the colleges accepted any highly intelligent students offered them by thirty well-known progressive schools (they seem to have rejected those not highly intelligent) and compared the college performance of these students with that of students trained in a more conventional curriculum. The "progressive" students did as well as or better than their "controls." If the depression had continued another ten years and World War II had not intervened, the Thirty-School Experiment might have had profound effects on college admissions. It was almost immediately forgotten, however, since its conclusion came during the first year of the war; and the postwar competition for admission to colleges made students and teachers reluctant to risk an unconventional curriculum.

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aminations further back in the school year. Now the important examinations occur in January and March of the senior year; increasing numbers of students have been taking some examinations in their junior year; and in 1959 more than half a million—perhaps a million—juniors will take a preliminary examination in October. Obviously examinations can no longer cover any specific body of material studied in the senior year.

For readers not informed through their own recent experience or that of their children, let me describe the Board examinations briefly.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test, required for admission by more than 200 of the best known colleges and universities, is a three-hour test of verbal and mathematical ability. The mathematics involved is simple—arithmetic, geometry, elementary algebra, common sense. The candidate is rewarded for quickness and accuracy in computation; knowledge of short-cuts gives greater speed and a higher score. Students who have completed the first two years of high school mathematics are adequately prepared, though the Board's research shows that those who are currently studying math do better than those who have dropped it a year or two before. Tutoring is probably useless except for those not currently taking math.

The verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test attempts to measure extent and precision of vocabulary, ability to read and comprehend brief passages in a variety of styles and on a variety of subjects, and what might be called verbal and literary sophistication. No knowledge of any specific book is required, though of course wide general reading assists students to read difficult material with better comprehension. The Board has steadfastly claimed that no tutoring or special cramming for this test can give the candidate any significant advantage.

Nevertheless a large and lucrative industry has grown up around the desire of students —and their parents—to increase their chances of admission to competitive colleges through a higher SAT verbal score. Cram-books and cram-schools flourish because the examinations are secret—that is, they are not published even after they have been given, and at least some questions are repeated in subsequent examinations. Each publisher or tutor can thus encourage rumors that he has somehow managed to secure questions that have been and therefore may be used on the examination itself. The student who believes the rumor and buys book or tutoring will have no way of knowing whether the merchandise helps him or not: the test is too long and the questions too numerous for him to judge how much he is directly prepared for; and he has no control to indicate how much, if at all, his score has improved. The Board, however, has conducted three controlled experiments, whose results confirm its claim that the effect of cramming is negligible.

About another kind of test—the Achievement Tests—the Board does not assert that there can be no specific preparation. For these are intended to measure competence of high school seniors in English composition, mathematics, social studies (chiefly American history), one of several foreign languages, or one of three sciences. Between fifty and a hundred colleges require candidates to take, in addition to the SAT, a series of three of these tests.

Since each test lasts only one hour (the whole "battery" of the SAT and three Achievement Tests can be fired at the candidate in one day), and since each test purports to cover its whole field, there are many short questions, and there is obviously no time for the writing of extended essays. In fact, except occasionally on the English Composition Test, there is no writing at all. Questions are multiple-choice: the candidate selects the "best" answer from five offered, and blacks in the space on his answer-sheet corresponding to the answer he has selected, using a special pencil so that the tests can be electrically scored.

To those who are skeptical of the power of such examinations to test wide fields of knowledge, or a complex skill like writing, the Board invariably offers a statistical answer. The tests, according to studies too

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numerous to mention and too complicated for the layman to understand, correlate well with, and are thus presumed to measure some quality that goes into, successful performance in college. The SAT is the best of the tests, statistically speaking, but the Achievement Tests give a good indication of the student's college performance in the field tested. A high score in French, for example, is a good augury of success in college courses in language. But a high SAT is a good augury of general success. So satisfied is the Board with the SAT that the statisticians almost always judge new tests by their correlation with it. A Board spokesman* describes the SAT as "the sun of the Copernican testing system of the future."

But the sun has spots on it, even if they are not visible to the naked eye.

Without accepting the canard that there are three kinds of lies—white lies, black lies, and statistics—we may legitimately question the concept of statistical truth as it applies to a student seeking admission to college. About atomic particles or about prime numbers, we are told, there can be no prediction for a single particle or number; there are only probabilities. Of the first N numbers, approximately $\frac{N}{\log N}$ will be prime. But if we meet a very large number and want to know if it is prime, rather than what its chances are of being prime, we must arduously try to factor it. Similarly, with sub-atomic particles, we cannot predict the fate of any given particle. We can predict only the collective fate of many particles. But students are not numbers or sub-atomic particles.

IN JUDGING any test, we employ two discrete concepts, reliability and validity. *Reliability* is the accuracy with which a test measures something. A test is perfectly reliable if the same student will always make the same score. Since the tests use different questions from year to year, and even within the same administration in one year, an elaborate process of experimenting with and pretesting of each question is necessary. If the same percentage of students get two questions right, or, better, if the same students get two questions right and all others get them wrong, the two questions are perfectly matched. And the Board's indefatigable research activities proclaim that questions do match.

The Board tests are scored on a scale of 200 to 800. 500 is the average (not of a particular year or administration of tests, but an ideal average). Two-thirds of all scores are between 400 and 600, one-sixth between 600 and 800, and about 3 per cent between 700 and 800. That is, they are on a curve, with the median at 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Highly competitive colleges expect successful applicants to make 600 or over. Roughly speaking, scores are reliable within 35 points on this scale. That is, the chances are excellent that a student re-taking the test will get within 35 points of his first score. The chances are good, of course, that he will come much closer. Thus a difference of more than 35 points between two students is said to indicate a real difference in ability or knowledge.

The reliability of reading is almost perfect. Papers are machine-scored, and each is in addition checked by a clerk. There is practically no chance that a mistake can be made in scoring; if there are mistakes (and there are!), they are built into the questions, not created by oversight in marking answers.

There is no serious criticism of the reliability of Board tests. But of their validity there has always been criticism, both responsible and irresponsible; and the criticism grows along with the power of the Board and the pervasiveness of the tests.

Validity is concerned with what, if anything, the test measures and how well it measures. Since the Board tests are used for determining college admission, the crucial question is how well the tests predict college success. The answer to this question, I am sorry to say, is so complicated that the best I can suggest is, "pretty well."

*William C. Fels, "Test Prospects for Future Admissions Needs," *College Board Review*, Spring 1955, p. 14.

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A candidate who scores in the 700's is very likely to do well in any college—unless he falls hopelessly in love, or hates his roommate, or has not enough money, or is insulted by a respected professor, or is bored by all professors, or is neurotically eaten away by a conflict between his family's ambitions and his own. A candidate who scores in the 300's is unlikely to be admitted to most colleges and unlikely to do well in any—unless he is dogged or unusually well balanced, or falls in love with an intellectual and kindly girl, or is encouraged by a patient and perceptive professor. The matter is further complicated because colleges of equal reputation may differ widely in their standards of achievement; and it is notorious among students that no two departments of the same college mark alike. Thus the statistician who attempts to compare a reliably scored test with a variety of college grades is merely using a yardstick to measure a fogbank.

I put things somewhat unfairly, of course, but only to emphasize that predicting success in college studies is hazardous. The statement that the student's SAT score has a positive correlation of .67, or whatever the latest figure is (1.00 would be perfect), with his college grades is not much more meaningful than saying that it is a pretty good indicator.

The test-makers agree that college success demands more than a good test-score. The Board's reiterated official position is that the tests are only one indicator among many to be weighed by a college admissions office. To this subject I shall return later. But the test-makers insist that the tests do measure something and that the correlation proves it.

Yet correlation does not guarantee causal nexus. The correlation of the wearing of overcoats and heavy woolen clothing with freedom from polio is very high—because polio is scarce after the first frost. The doctors, however, advise Salk vaccine rather than an overcoat in August. And if it were eventually discovered (as it probably will not be) that air pollution rather than cigarettes is a prime cause of lung cancer, the high correlation between cigarette-smoking and lung cancer (because of the accidental correlation of cigarette-smoking and urban living) would have led many people vainly to give up smoking rather than to move out of town or clean up the air.

In spite of many pious disclaimers, the College Board's publicity fosters the notion that we need not look into the test if it provides a good correlation. Frank Ashburn, headmaster of the Brooks School and a prominent Board committeeman, laments that the ultimate consumers of the tests, the college teachers, know least about them.* But how could they know? A diligent reader of all the material put out by the Board could plod hundreds of pages before coming on anything about the wording of one question, the *content* of one examination. All is harmonious research and statistics.

High school teachers have complained, ever since 1945, that to move the Board examinations to a date early in the senior year has been to place a premium on swift, superficial teaching of many topics unrelated to each other except that they may occur on the Achievement Tests. This difficulty peculiarly besets courses in physics and chemistry and, to a lesser degree, American history. Yet to fight against the early date is hopeless, since the colleges retain sufficient control of the Board—it is nominally their creature—to dictate the time of examinations so that they may make their selections early. And everybody knows that the colleges now enjoy what promises to be a permanent buyer's market in candidates.

Teachers and school administrators complain, however, about much more than the date of the tests. And occasionally these criticisms come to public notice. William Harlan Hale, writing in the *Reporter* (October 6, 1955), made an unpleasant but shrewd and delightfully breezy attack on the whole system of multiple-choice tests. The Board, holding an unchallengeable monopoly, did not deign to answer. But we may gather, from

*Quoted in McGeorge Bundy, "Four Subjects and Four Hopes," *College Board Review*, Fall 1955, p. 20.

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occasional and elliptical reference to "ignorant attention in the public prints,"* that some of the barbs rankled. Mr. Hale's ignorance was Socratic rather than real, as any person familiar with the tests could perceive.

More recently, in the semi-public prints (*The American Scholar,* Spring 1959), Professor Banesh Hoffman, of the Queens College mathematics department, has subjected the SAT to searching and hostile scrutiny. His article "'Best Answers' or Better Minds?" concerns multiple-choice tests not as a criterion for college admission but as the chief screening device for the half-million candidates for national scholarships. If the tests are to pick out not merely acceptable minds but the very best, who are to be rewarded with a practically free college education, then the tests should be foolproof. They are not. Professor Hoffman, who has been permitted to study the complete text of an SAT, may not report on this secret document (the price is literally seven dollars a look—that being the fee for taking the test) except to say that in his opinion the published "sample questions" give a flattering picture of the test. And he finds the sample questions, which he may quote and analyze, to be seriously defective. A thoughtful and intelligent student would be led by some questions to distrust either the competence or the good will of the examiner.

"Not all people who study the above question," Professor Hoffman writes about one sample, "regard it as seriously defective. But this fact does not make it acceptable. If a sizable number of qualified, intelligent people believe a question to be so worded that the wanted answer is unacceptable, we already have sufficient reason for branding the question defective, for there will be intelligent examinees who will realize the same thing, and they will be penalized for their perspicacity."

Such criticism will very likely be brushed aside by the Board, or at best buried in a research project whose committee will eventually report a correlation as high as .73 between success in college and a correct guess on the offending question. This will be validity enough for the Board. But Professor Hoffman, and others who make essentially the same objections, is talking about validity of *content.* There is a high correlation in high school seniors between knowledge of trigonometry and knowledge of physics. But if the physics teacher marks his students on the basis of a test in trigonometry, they will remind him of the validity of content, even if they do not use the term.

IF, THEN, we examine the content and phrasing of questions, we shall find the Board's confidence in its wares misplaced. Though a mathematical illiterate, even I note one curious sample of the mathematics section of the SAT:

If a man walks 1 mile north, then 1½ miles west, and then 1 mile north, how many miles will he be from his starting point?

This is the choice of answer: *A)* $\frac{1}{2}\sqrt{13}$ *B)* 2 *C)* 5/2 *D)* $1+\frac{1}{2}\sqrt{13}$ *E)* 3.

The "correct" answer is C, obtained by using the Pythagorean formula, which is given the candidate at the beginning of the test—or, more quickly, by perceiving that this is the special case of the 3-4-5 triangle. But the problem is not fully stated. *Since 2 miles is offered as a possibility,* we must know the latitude of the man's starting point. If it is 90° South, or approximately 89° 58′ North, then the correct answer is 2 miles, or B. Figure it out—if you like parlor games. Now, a student who gives B as the correct answer may be a crackpot, a devotee of parlor games, and should be screened out of the company of intelligent men; or he may be an obsessive-compulsive who wastes time by thinking of everything and thus should be penalized. But he may be of the rare and thoughtful type that the test should select and reward. I do not know whether my mathematical colleagues find a high correlation between love of number tricks and real mathematical skill; but I do know that the late John von Neumann loved number

*Bundy, *loc. cit.*

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tricks. The College Board's assurance that a von Neumann would get all the other questions right (unless he died of boredom during the test) may be well founded. But a von Neumann might be screened out of a national scholarship by just such a question, which, unanswerable as it stands, a routine mind will answer "correctly."

In the Verbal section of the SAT, which is the most important single criterion for college admission today,* though we cannot find outright errors like the mathematical slip above, we find a number of disturbing questions among the published samples. Professor Hoffman has analyzed one and says he has made a detailed study of all. Here are two that he does not mention:

The fathers of the Constitution were ___ *: the Constitution did not create rights, it recognized them.*

You are to insert one of these words: *A) originators B) recorders C) debtors D) lawyers E) wrong.*

Of course the answer is B. Except for A, however, which is clearly incorrect, a good case can be made out for any of the others. The Board calls these plausible but incorrect choices "distractors"; the students call them "sucker shots" or "mousetrap plays." The art of the multiple-choice test is to avoid the merely plausible and select the most plausible. Yet unless the student knows a good deal of history—and after all, this is a reading test, not a social studies test—he may think the Founding Fathers made some claim to originality and were wrong. Or he may, with better reason, consider them as debtors of the past, or lawyers interested in precedents and rights. The distinction between "distractors" and genuine possibility of truth becomes nebulous for a thoughtful person.

A worse example:

Dogmas are the ___ *of some* ___ *system of thought of a particular epoch.*

You are to insert one of these pairs: *A) meaning . . philosophical B) by-product . . new C) crystallizations . . dominant D) axioms . . fallacious E) affirmations . . historical.*

A fine way to become dizzy is to consider this question for a long time. I shall save you the experience by telling you that the Board's answer is C. It is obviously false, however, since Christian Scientists or Doukhobors, for example, cherish certain dogmas; but neither group can be said to have developed a system of thought dominant in any epoch. D and A are at least equally true answers—and perhaps B. You pays your seven dollars and takes your choice.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test, therefore, the sun of the Copernican system of Board tests, has spots on it. It clearly favors the quick but superficial. Since most intelligent students are quick, most of them will do well. This is not good enough for a test for which such claims are made and on which college admissions officers, school guidance counselors, and national scholarship committees rely so heavily.

ABOUT most of the Achievement Tests—the planets of the College Board system—I am not competent to speak. But about one, the English Composition Test, I can speak from my personal knowledge as a reader. The ECT is the Jupiter of the planets. Practically all students who take Achievement Tests must include English composition. And the atmosphere of Jupiter is methane and ammonia, vast, dense, inimical to life.

Until 1942 competence in English literature and composition was tested, and fairly thoroughly, by a three-hour examination. For several years thereafter, candidates were asked to write an hour essay on some topic of which presumably everybody† would possess some knowledge. Papers were judged on their correctness in the mechanics of

*At a recent school-and-college conference on testing, the question was asked, "What is the distinction between a low Verbal SAT score and infant damnation?"

†Except in 1943, when the question was on radio programs. One candidate simply wrote, "Since I am totally deaf, I do not listen to the radio and cannot answer the question."

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spelling, punctuation, and grammar, on their skill in organization, and on possible grace or distinction of style.

So far, so good. But the grading of essays presents a serious problem of reliability. Two or more competent teachers may differ widely on the grade for any particular essay. And the Board could devise no system, though it spent much time and money in trying to devise one, to eliminate all significant difference of opinion in grading. Besides this inevitable difficulty, there was the difficulty of sheer numbers. From a few thousand before the war, the English test has shot up to almost 100,000—the bulk of them in March, but thousands at other administrations of the test during the year. Hence the English Composition Test, like all the rest, went multiple-choice. For most of it the students did not write; they selected the "best" phrase or sentence from several and penciled in blocks according to their guesses. Reading reliability improved enormously: from a stray comet in the universe of testing, the ECT became a predictable planetary orbit.

Such perturbations as remained in the ECT were due to its origin—the essentially immeasurable realms of phrase and taste. The readers of *part* of the test (about half of it was machine-scored) gathered from all over the country at Princeton, the headquarters of the Board, to be taught how to make uniform judgments of writing. Though this procedure had the merit of enabling many English teachers to sneak unauthorized glimpses of the "secret" multiple-choice part of the test, the reading reliability was still unsatisfactory. The Board jettisoned the last little essay (one-half hour or twenty minutes) and substituted a badly written passage printed with wide spaces between the lines; the candidate crosses out erroneous phrases and writes in his corrections. This is now the only writing in the standard Board examination, and even this is omitted in all but the March series.

Reading reliability is now respectable. The readers may park their judgment at the Princeton hotels where they are quartered by the Board; for now alertness only is required, the permissible corrections and impermissible lapses all being duly charted by the head readers.

Since, however, the head readers are not always the people who have set the examination, curious splits develop in evaluation. For example, one head reader is notorious for his dislike of the semicolon, which he deems as vestigial as the vermiform appendix. Hence all readers are instructed to overlook the "comma fault" (the use of the comma instead of the semicolon in a sentence like, "Humor offends his dignity, therefore he finds it intolerable"). English teachers in general dislike and penalize the comma fault. But as docile Board readers they accept it, not without grumbling. I remember hearing one reader sententiously snarl, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are presiding over the death of the semicolon." I remember, too, his fury when he discovered (by peeking) that the machine-scored part of the test included a sentence in which the student had to correct the comma fault or lose credit—the machine was still set to believe in the semicolon. By such magic, no doubt, is correlation achieved.

Perhaps we should shed no tears over the semicolon. But the test occasionally contains downright errors: I remember seeing (illegally) so grotesque a distortion of E. A. Robinson's sonnet "The Sheaves" that a student who happened to know the poem would be handicapped by his knowledge. This question was repeated on a subsequent examination. Another kind of error I can illustrate not from an actual examination but from another group of tests (the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, or STEP) that Educational Testing Services is promoting. The student is offered this sentence:

The publishers, Allen and Watts, are well known and reputable; thus providing young homemakers with ideas and practical plans for their present and future homes.

The question: *As the sentence is now written, which way of punctuating it is most acceptable?*

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A) *reputable; thus (as it is now)*
B) *reputable: thus*
C) *reputable. Thus*
D) *reputable, thus*

The student is required to heal the fracture of a sentence with the Band-Aid of a comma. It is true that the next question offers him an acceptable rewriting of the sentence. But this question cannot be answered. And though, I think, nothing so stultifying appears on the ECT, some similarly unacceptable alternatives do appear.

ENGLISH teachers in both schools and colleges began to protest against the robot-scored English Composition Test immediately after its adoption. The high school teachers, at least, were altruistic in their protests, because the ECT is easy to cram for and an essay test is not. In response to general feeling that, whatever statisticians say, the only way to test writing is by writing, the Board experimented with an essay test and, in 1954, actually administered such a test at its May series (which is taken only by juniors for practice and guidance, the seniors being already safely stowed in colleges).

An unexpectedly large number (about 4,000) took this General Composition Test, many of them influenced by the large women's colleges, which had "recommended" (in these days tantamount to "required") it for girls planning to apply the following year. What happened next is still a matter for debate; I shall give my own version.

The test and reading were under the direction of Dr. Earle Eley, of the University of Chicago, who in spite of his good humor may be described as the last angry man of the College Board. Dr. Eley devised ways of instructing readers so that fair reliability was attained—greater than ever before for an essay test. But the Board dragged its feet, keeping the examination at two-hour length and thus preventing colleges that require three tests from using it; refusing to consider setting it during the March series for seniors; and botching the administration of it by forcing the candidates to stop for five or ten minutes at the end of the first hour. After two years the test was dropped, in spite of protests from teachers familiar with it—most were not, since the Board's effective publicity apparatus had played it down. In the report announcing the demise of the General Composition Test, the Board graciously included a blast from Dr. Eley in its defense and many polite words on the necessity of further experimentation and the desirability of testing writing by writing if such a test could be made as satisfactory as the present ECT.

In short, essay tests, except for students seeking advanced standing as they enter college, seem to be safely dead for the next few years. Most English teachers prefer an essay test, even if it is not wholly reliable. For they do not consider that what the ECT does measure extensively—the knack of editing perversely illiterate copy and of compressing mealy adjectival clauses into phrases or single words—is the quintessence of the art of writing.

The ECT is fundamentally illogical, whatever its correlation. No doubt the cop who tests an applicant for a driving license by a practice spin round a block studded with trucks and stoplights cannot guarantee that the tyro will be forever accident-free. But he can readily detect either the clumsy menace or the instinctively skillful operator. At least he tests driving by driving. The ECT would test driving by skill in identifying different makes of cars and in reading traffic signs. An essay test would test driving by driving.

The Board's decision is based—aside from its natural bias for block-filling—on the supposition that, if it is hard to achieve reliability for 4,000 papers, it would be impossible to achieve it for 100,000. But the difficulties, which it is idle to deny, are not insurmountable. They are surmounted every year in the British educational system, which requires several essays, not merely a single essay, of candidates for scholarships and places in the universities. The difficulties can be surmounted here, given time and money, with which the Board is well supplied. But those who have followed the Board's progress over the last twenty years have come more and more

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to harbor the fear that the Board is not interested.

The Board seems to be dominated by statisticians. But many teachers have come to feel that the statisticians are no longer influenced by the teachers whose servants they are—or ought to be. The essay test was an experiment in the right direction, a response to pressure. Now the heat is off, the step is retracted, and the old trend is resumed. Teachers busy with their jobs can apply pressure only intermittently. The statisticians, on the Board the year around, yield to the pressure temporarily and insignificantly but frustrate it steadily and massively. Except for an imputation of motives obviously inappropriate, one could reasonably adduce a parallel from politics—the perpetual triumph of the machine over the voter.

College teachers want students who can write. High school teachers would like to supply the demand. Both groups think they should require more writing of the student, and naturally both want the student to be properly tested. Between the two groups stands the Board, dividing and ruling.

At every organized or unorganized discussion of problems of high school and college teaching and testing, these sentiments are loudly and often eloquently voiced. Everybody agrees that writing should be tested by writing. Then the representative of the Board rises to face the drumfire (there should be a special bonus paid for such unswerving devotion to a thankless task). He unreels his statistics. He explains, parries, soothes, confuses. At the end of the fray he escapes to Princeton, no doubt exhausted but victorious over the clear consensus of the meeting, to continue for another year the process of awarding driving licenses on the basis of skill in reading stop signs and identifying Buicks.

THE apparent precision of Board scores vanishes when we try to find what the scores are based on. Uncertainty has moved from the reading to the questions themselves, but it is still uncertainty. I said earlier that to try to predict the nebulous concept of success in college by precise examinations is to measure a fogbank with a yardstick. Now we see that the yardstick—no matter how nicely calibrated—is often elastic, brittle, or diaphanous.

What to do? Professor Hoffman proposes that the learned societies set up a committee —of scholars, not statisticians—to examine the examinations. If multiple-choice tests can be made satisfactory, they should be patched up; if not, substitutes should be developed. I wish such a committee luck. It will need both luck and courage: like other monopolies, the Board shows polished public relations manners, but it is tough and resilient in combat.

Any examination or examination-system, even a daily quiz in a one-room school, has a life of its own. It becomes in some measure independent of the forces that created it, and goes on, in turn, creating other forces. And the College Board, in spite of its official disclaimer of responsibility for the high school curriculum, becomes more enormously influential every day. It is the academic embodiment of mass civilization.

I wish it were possible to offer students and their parents the consolation that the colleges, since they should know as well as I do that the Board tests are fallible, consider equally important such things as a school record, a personal interview, and information on a detailed application blank—and so refine the rough justice of a statistical examination with more flexible and perceptive human judgment. The colleges do indeed consider these things seriously; but the colleges, too, are fallible.

Two years ago the Board conducted a series of experiments in which many of the nation's leading admissions officers were asked to forecast the college performance of actual (but anonymous) students. The admissions officers knew not only the students' Board scores but also their school records, their extra-curricular activities, their principals' recommendations, and the impressions they created in personal interviews. I should be contemptuous of the dismally low batting averages compiled by these deans of deans if I had not tried myself to predict, from the same material, and failed as often as they. Dr.

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Benno Fricke, of the University of Michigan, reporting on the experiments,* gloomily concludes, "Many freshmen will continue to be enrolled in institutions where they are unlikely to be successful or most productive."

To the victims or beneficiaries of rough justice on examinations, I can only suggest that there is a wide distinction between education and testing. The great difficulty is that men who are really expert in any subject, from physics to Sanskrit, are interested in the subject and possibly in teaching it, but not in measuring youthful competence in it. They say, "I want to have him for a while in my laboratory, or my classroom, or my seminar; I want to see what he writes and says and does, now and later. Then I'll tell you if he's any good." These are the men whose judgment is ultimately decisive. But these men are not interested in test-making.

Any student happening to read these words may find them discouraging. They are not so intended. A score on an examination may be unjust, or unjustly favorable; it may or may not represent anything real in the way of knowledge or skill. But whether or not it represents reality, it is itself a reality, a fact—and we have to learn to live with facts. The test-makers, however fallible, do exist, and we are more or less in their power. Recognition of their grave limitations may help us, if we score low, to retain pride and determination to learn; and if we score high, to realize we may be quick and superficial, or merely lucky, and so to retain some decent humility.

Quite contrary to the College Board's publicity and products, the better the examination, the harder it is to score. The fullest and best examination is life itself, and only God, we are told, knows how to score a life.

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THE BIBLE OF THE ISRAELIS

Sacred and Profane

HERBERT WEINER

ON THE altar of the Baptist church in Nazareth is a painting of the River Jordan, flowing along gently curving green banks whose trees trail their boughs peacefully in its blue waters. It is a Jordan nobody in Israel has ever seen. The minister of the church, Dwight Baker, smilingly explains, "Mother used a bit of her imagination when she painted this picture for us." He knows that the real Jordan (the name means "descender") is for most of its length a disappointingly narrow, sinuous stream, descending precipitously into the barren hole of the Dead Sea, twelve hundred feet below sea level. It must have been something of a shock to the minister's mother, who comes from the American Midwest, to see the Biblical Zion of her imagination come to life. But this is a problem which has always confronted pilgrims to the Holy Land. Even for native Israelis, the "coming to life" of the Bible in the land of the Bible not infrequently evokes a mixture of emotions—breathtaking fulfillment along with some disappointment and questions.

This ambiguity of reaction was present to some extent last year, in the summer of 1958, when the Bible "came alive" in a surprising way. The whole country seemed then to be lifted on a wave of national self-gratulation as a result of an international Bible contest which has since gone down in history as the first World Bible Quiz. Israelis are still proud of the fact that while American marines were landing in Lebanon and the Russians were threatening war in the Middle East, Radio Kol Israel canceled its news broadcasts so that the country could pay undivided attention to the quiz. "Where else," was the rhetorical question on everybody's lips, "would you see the population of a country go wild about a Bible contest? Where else would the President of a state [one of the questions in the preceding National Bible Contest had been submitted by President Ben Zvi] and the Prime Minister, and intellectuals, and farmers and children, stay up until two o'clock in the morning because of a Bible quiz?"

The Bible quiz had originally been planned as a minor event of the 10th Anniversary Year celebration. But the planning committee saw that it had hit upon the program of the year. With bated breath the nation now awaited the World Bible Quiz, when the representatives of thirteen countries would meet in an international confrontation which to many Israelis seemed as significant, on its level, as the debate then going on at the same time in the United Nations. "Only," a paper pointed out, "this is one contest Israelis cannot afford to lose."

I was not among the twenty-two hundred people who crowded into the stadium of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem the night of the contest, in August 1958. But I had managed to find a radio which I shared with two Israeli children. The announcer gave a vivid description of the scene, which was witnessed by Israel's own highest dignitaries, by the foreign diplomatic corps, and by other important guests. They beheld a brilliantly lit elevated platform, with a lower stage for the contestants and an upper level for the chief judge of the contest and his

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THE diverse meanings which the Bible holds for Israelis is the subject of HERBERT WEINER's present report. Readers will recall his two-part article on "The Religious Impulse in Israel" in July and August 1955. More recently, he contributed a critical essay on the Pulitzer Prize play *J.B.* (February 1959). Rabbi Weiner holds the pulpit of Temple Israel in South Orange, New Jersey.

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colleagues. Below, to one side, were tables for the consultants, translators, and other functionaries. Against the dark background of the sky, lit up by powerful spotlights, rose twelve colorful banners representing the tribes of Israel. Above was the over-arching canopy of a cloudless Jerusalem night jeweled with a slim crescent moon and bright masses of stars.

THE World Bible Quiz opened with a flourish of trumpets and the appearance on the platform of the tall, kindly figure of Israel's President, Isaac Ben Zvi. The "Nasi" said a few words about the symbolic significance of an event dealing with Torah, on the hills of Jerusalem. Then the Kol Israel Choral Group sang, "I shall lift up mine eyes unto the hills . . ." and modulated from the religious mood of this psalm into the hora-tempo, "And from Zion shall go forth the Law." The massed banners of the tribes under the Jerusalem sky, the trumpets announcing the President of the State, and the two song moods, bridging two thousand years of history—the scene seemed to signify the miracle of the past ten years.

But the contest got under way when the President introduced Justice Chessin of the Supreme Court, elected Quiz Master. In a voice that could not have been less solemn than the High Priest's in the ancient Temple, he called the contest to order. He bade the other judges "ascend" the platform, intoning the name of each while the audience responded with appropriate applause. He then called on the consultants, the contestants, and the translators also to "ascend." The applause rose to a crescendo when Amos Chacham, the Israeli national champion, took his place. One of my listening companions at our radio, a nine-year-old boy, joined excitedly in the applause.

"Is Bible one of your favorite subjects?" I asked him.

"Tk," he clicked his teeth Arab-style. "It's boring." But this obviously had nothing to do with his enthusiasm for Israel's new national hero, Amos Chacham, whose name and life story were by now known to almost every adult and child in the land. Everyone knew, for example, that Chacham had had to borrow a shirt for his first appearance in the national contest. The Israeli champion was a thirty-one-year-old bachelor who lived alone in a barely furnished room, and worked as a clerk in a Jerusalem institution for the blind. He had never finished secondary school, and, outside of his work, had only two enjoyments—the study of mathematics at home and the reading of the Torah in a local synagogue. As a baby, he had fallen from his crib and received a spinal injury which had partially paralyzed his face and body and impaired the quality of his speech.

The new national hero had confessed to reporters after winning the contest that he had not been altogether surprised, though he had been mistaken in calculating which of his competitors was "most dangerous." He had chided the press for taking up too much of his time—he could not, he said, properly prepare "for the contest in which he would have to represent his country." Amos Chacham was quite serious about his mission, but he had little cause for worry.

The gap in points between him and the foreign contestants was embarrassing. Chacham (the name means "wise") replied with ease to questions such as, "Where do we find things mentioned in threes and fours, or in sixes and sevens?" He not only gave the correct place and quotations, but supplemented his reply with masses of extra detail which evoked gasps of admiration from the audience. Justice Chessin forgot his neutrality and complimented the Israeli champion, while the radio announcer pointed out that "this is an example of the keen analytic brain of Amos Chacham at work." Several times the white-haired Ben Gurion, sitting in the front row, could be seen literally jumping out of his seat, Bible in hand, when Amos succeeded in answering a particularly difficult question. Despite his lead, however, it was observed that the Israeli champion carefully kept his own score in a little black book which he grasped in his hands all evening.

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The weary rounds of questions, translations, and re-translations went on until the early morning, and finally put my little companions to sleep. They were not up to hear the occasional diverting moments of the contest, as when Sara Rabinowitz, the elderly Mexican champion, who told reporters when she arrived that she believed in the New Testament, suffered some traumatic regression and asked that the question put to her be translated into Yiddish. The panel of judges refused on the ground that the eight official languages of the contest had previously been established, and Yiddish was not among them.

In the early hours of the morning, Amos Chacham was proclaimed "Aluf Ha-Tanach" —Champion of the Bible, and led in triumphant procession to a Jerusalem hotel where a crowd of several thousand had waited up to greet him. The champion stood on a balcony, at 3 o'clock in the morning. "Just like the Day of Independence," he said, as he waved awkwardly to his admirers below.

FOLLOWING the contest, the press burst into another round of enthusiastic editorial comment. The newspaper Herut, of the right-wing Revisionist party, suggested that the real value of the contest might be the pricking of the world's conscience into realizing that Abraham had been promised both sides of the Jordan by the Bible. Other papers pointed out the international public-relations value of the quiz. But the main thought expressed everywhere was that the Bible contest had been a revelation not only to the world but to the Israelis themselves of how alive the Bible was in modern Israel. If the world wanted to see an example of the values that still prevailed in the land of the Bible, let it gaze on the type of person who becomes a national hero there—"Champion of the Bible, Amos Chacham."

A day or two after the contest, in among the enthusiastic editorials, appeared a letter complimenting the organizers of the contest and Amos Chacham, but asking mildly whether the title "Champion of the Bible" might not better be reserved for something "other than" the winner of the quiz contest?

Other voices were troubled about what this "historic event" indicated as to the meaning of the Bible for the modern Israeli. Some were concerned about the mingling of Biblical psalms and Madison Avenue quiz techniques, fearing it was typical of that confusion of the holy and the secular which characterizes so much of Israeli life. They still remembered the newspaper photographs of a bearded army chaplain in a jeep on his way to the Sinai campaign, with a submachine gun on one arm and a Torah on the other. Others asked whether it was right to treat the Bible as if it were some national asset like oil to be utilized as a tool for public relations? And there were still others who shared the compunction of the writer of the letter who was troubled by the title "Champion of the Bible." Could or should one's "understanding" of the Bible be tested as one tests the ability to acquire facts about automobiles or geography? Isn't the kind of "understanding" called for by the Bible itself related to life, to character and deeds, rather than to memory responses?

The significance of the World Bible Quiz was still a subject of discussion at the opening of the Seventh Annual Bible Congress in Jerusalem this spring. More than a thousand people had gathered to discuss thirty-four papers on the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In the center of the long speakers' table on the platform sat the Prime Minister, and he seemed more interested in turning the pages of his little black Bible than in listening to the opening formalities. The background light shining through the famous but thinning tangle of his white hair gave it a diaphanous, halo-like effect. But there was nothing angelic about the Prime Minister's chin-jutting style of delivery when he rose to speak.

"Only here in the land of its birth," said Ben Gurion, "can the Bible be understood properly." Then to make sure that those with whom he disagreed would get his point, the Prime Minister went on to say that the rabbis who had labored to interpret the Bible outside of Israel, during two thousand years

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of post-Biblical history, might have served some other purpose by their tortuous explanations, but they had perverted the original meaning of the Book of Books. The audience understood that Ben Gurion was jousting with two "views"—the Orthodox religious, and those of his own party who accused him of "Bibliolatry."

The Prime Minister made no mention of the Bible quiz which he had at the time proclaimed to be "a historic event." Others on the platform, however, alluded to it with glowing nostalgia. In contrast, there was an apologetic tone in the rather cryptic statement of Justice Chessin (the contest Quiz Master) to the effect that he understood perfectly the necessity of not confusing "the boundaries between the holy and the profane." A bit weakly, the Judge insisted that despite criticism the Bible contest had been of value.

WHATEVER differences of opinion last summer's Bible quiz continues to evoke, it has by now slipped into the framework of a larger discussion of unabating intensity in Israel—the meaning of the Bible in that land today.

Like most subjects in Israel, this one cannot be discussed very long without reference to the political-ideological blocs into which the nation is divided. All groups—whether committed to the full Orthodoxy of the religious parties, the anti-religious view of Mapam, or the non-committal religious neutrality of the majority Mapai grouping—begin with seeming agreement: the Bible is and must remain the cornerstone of Jewish education and culture. Not even the most avid church-state separationist would dare suggest that the government radio eliminate its daily Bible readings, or change the program time signal imitating a traditional Biblical chant. The schools of the secular "socialist" parties are at one with the religious school system in allotting the Bible a "core" position in the curriculum. Study of "Tanach" is given five hours per week in the latter system, and four hours in the former. Thus there is no disagreement among the political groups about the importance of the Bible's role in modern Israeli culture; it is only with regard to "understanding" of the Bible that they differ sharply.

Here, the least ambiguous response is that of the Orthodox, who say that a proper understanding of the Bible (as Chief Rabbi Unterman of Tel Aviv quickly replied to Ben Gurion after his speech at the Bible Congress) must involve the post-Biblical interpretations of the rabbis. And the qualification for a "Bible champion" should certainly include a commitment to the Sinaitic revelation and to the hundreds of commandments listed in the Bible or implied in its text, as taught by the post-Biblical rabbinic authorities. This is the "understanding" of the Bible given to the children in Israel's Orthodox religious schools, which comprise about 35 per cent of the total educational system.

As proof that such an approach to the Bible can be exciting even in modern Israel, Orthodox educators point to a teacher like Nehama Leibowitz. For many years Miss Leibowitz has been conducting her own weekly Bible quiz. She draws up questionnaires on the meaning of sentences in the "portion of the week." Most of her questions involve a reading of the Bible in the light of rabbinic commentators like the 11th-century Rashi or the 12th-century Maimonides. This questionnaire, which she personally corrects, is eagerly read and answered not only by "religious" Jews, but by hundreds of "free-thinkers" who still remember their old-country religious training. In classroom at night, or in her own dimly lit, book-filled house, Nehama Leibowitz teaches both young and old to read the Bible through what she calls the "problem" approach. From out of her long, angular face, Nehama's dark eyes glitter with excitement as her "learners" raise their hands to line up with one rabbinic authority against another in the interpretation of a text. Under her prodding, students fulfill the midrashic suggestion that the Bible be studied as "a rock" upon which the mind acts as an intellectual hammer, "bringing forth a variety of sparks," all of them exposing a different aspect of

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the truth. Miss Leibowitz does not disguise her contempt for those who would claim to "understand" the Bible without its historic rabbinic interpretation.

Also Orthodox, but in a softer, more mystical mood, is the Biblical "understanding" advocated by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, son of the former Chief Rabbi of Israel. I saw Zvi Yehuda Kook a few days after the World Bible Quiz. He had been asked, he told me, to be a judge in the contest, but had declined, and in a press interview the day before he had offered his reasons. Zvi Yehuda did not seem disturbed that the papers had neglected to print his remarks. He exonerated the reporters, who, he said "might not have understood"—and they well might not. Zvi Yehuda speaks with a rush of words that include a heavy sprinkling of rabbinic and cabbalistic terms. In his quiet office, with the portrait of his famous father looking down, he stated his view for me. His brown eyes twinkled:

"Not that one should deny the positive value of such an affair—the quiz. There are all kinds of sports—football, baseball, and this kind of sport is better than most—yes, there are good sides as well as bad sides."

"And what is the bad side?" I asked. It is always hard for him to say something negative about Israel.

"Well, the bad side is a 'transformazia'—a falsification of the essential nature of the Torah—our Bible. For example," explained Zvi Yehuda, "a World Bible Quiz in which representatives of various religions display their 'understanding' of the Bible implies that every religion can have its authentic 'view' of the Torah. This is not the way our fathers looked at the Torah," he said. "Not that there has been any lack of saintly non-Jews, worthy of the world to come. But there have also been scholars who cut off the Bible from the living Jewish people about them, and saw no contradiction between praising the Biblical Israelites while persecuting flesh-and-blood Jews around them.

"Actually," said Zvi Yehuda, "the Torah is but an expression of the historic Jewish soul concentrated into a specific form. Jewish history and Torah and the Jewish people are but different aspects of the same living organic reality." To imply that one can "understand" the Torah while cutting it away from its special connection with the living Jewish people is a "falsification," according to him.

It is also a "falsification" to imply that the Torah can be understood "cut off" from the interpretations and meanings that have grown organically out of it during the last two thousand years of its historic life. "This," said Zvi Yehuda, "is the 'smallness of vision' affecting many including Ben Gurion."

"And there is another 'cutting off,'" the Rabbi went on, "more serious. We hear the phrase 'people of the Book' so often that we think it comes from Jewish sources. Actually it is a Moslem-coined phrase. From the Jewish point of view we are not a 'people of the Book' but a 'people of God.' The Book is just one of the instruments that connects us with a Higher Source. It is but a partial revelation of this Higher Source. This too is a 'cutting off,' a form of idolatry—a substitution of the part for the whole, of knowledge of a Book for submission to the will of God."

"And what did the reporters say to all this?" I asked him.

The Rabbi's eyes crinkled again in a smile. "One of the reporters asked me if the quiz and the image shown to the world of a Prime Minister jumping out of his seat in the excitement of the contest was not good from the political and public relations point of view. But this is the great error of Ben Gurion and Ahad Ha-am—the use of the Bible as a means of serving man or the state rather than the study of the Bible for its own sake or as a revelation of God's will."

Zvi Yehuda sighed. "As a leader of the state, Ben Gurion has all my respect. But in matters of Torah and spirit . . ." the Rabbi shook his head.

BEN Gurion and Ahad Ha-am—discussion of the Bible in Israel frequently centers about these two names. The ideology of Ahad Ha-am has become the special target

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of the attack against the "understanding" of the Bible as taught in most of the non-religious schools.

Asher Ginsberg, the Russian-born essayist who wrote under the pen-name of "One of the people"—Ahad Ha-am, influenced the Zionist circles in Eastern Europe which produced Ben Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, and most of Israel's present leadership. It was he who best expressed the "solution" sought by the non-religious nationalist elements of that generation. Basically, they had the problem of reconciling loyalty to the heritage of their people with 19th-century ideas of nationalism and evolution. They wished to remain committed to their people's God-saturated cultural and literary tradition, though no longer sharing their fathers' faith in a living God. They liked to think of themselves as the generation that stood "at the crossroads"—the title of one of Ahad Ha-am's famous essays. But it was not necessary, suggested Ahad Ha-am, to choose one or the other of the crossroads. It was possible to combine reverence for the old literature with modern thinking, Biblical criticism, and science. For example, he said, it was not important for those who wanted to be "scientific" about the Bible to believe that Moses ever existed. It was enough to realize that the Bible image of the great prophet was "true" in that it revealed the true spiritual ideals of the Jewish people. "And the ideal is created in the spirit of our people and the creator creates in its own image. And images like these, in which the spirit of the people embodies its inner yearnings, continually form themselves unconsciously and without deliberate intent."

Ahad Ha-am's thesis was that the Jewish people possessed a national ego, a "will to live" capable of creating not only prophets like Moses, but an image of the Creator of the World. In this sense even a non-religious Zionist might call the God of Israel his God, since it is an expression of his people's national ego. It was of course a semantic blur, but of pragmatic value in the early Zionist days, when it enabled all shades of religious opinion to join in the common goal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. As late as 1948, during the writing of the Declaration of Independence, Ben Gurion could put his Ahad Ha-am training to good use. The religious parties in the War Cabinet insisted that a historic document like the Declaration of Independence was inconceivable without mention of God. Some of the secularists were just as insistent that God had nothing to do with the creation of the Jewish State. It was Ben Gurion who suggested that the Declaration use the neutral term "Rock of Israel," which the religious could interpret as God, and the secularist as the "national ego" of the Jewish people, and so it was written.

THIS is the "transformazia" which, Zvi Yehuda Kook mildly complains, cuts off the Jewish nation and its Bible from a living God. But not so gentle is the criticism leveled against this type of "theology" by the sharp-penned literary critic Baruch Kurzweil. "The teaching of Ahad Ha-am to this day works as a force in the destruction of whatever remnants of religious faith are still left in the hearts of our youth," says Kurzweil, who doesn't hesitate to attack the sacrosanct figure of Ahad Ha-am himself, calling him a "mediocre" thinker, who put together an unprofound hash of "19th-century positivist pragmatist evolutionary ideas—a combination of Hume, Spencer, J. S. Mill, Darwin, and Welhausen." Ahad Ha-am was personally a man of high ethical sensitivity, admits Kurzweil, but the "blurring" of the transcendental God of Israel with the "Rock of Israel" which expresses the "will to live" of a nation, is the first step in an ethical desensitization inevitably leading to incidents like Kibya and Kafr Kassem. It is not enough for Ben Gurion to rise in the Knesset and express horror at the killing of innocent Arabs in Kafr Kassem. He should realize that this is the consequence of a philosophy which substitutes the ego of a people for the transcendental God of Israel who in the past was the Judge of that ego.

Needless to say, Kurzweil's religious crit-

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icism of an understanding of the Bible which eliminates God makes slight impression on the educators of the leftist-oriented Mapam party. In the high schools and elementary schools under their influence, children learn to reconcile the Biblical text with Marxism as interpreted by Boruchov. The prophets are seen "not only as religious fighters but really as national workers, communal servants of the people. Only the style of the prophetic language was religious . . . they speak in the name of God only because no other form of expression was known to the ancient Hebrew." As for the chapters on creation, another of their educators says bluntly: "The stories about the creation of the world implant in the young child a feeling of dependence upon some upper power . . . they sow in the heart of the little child religious seeds of fear and subservience, weakening the hands of man. . . . All this is completely opposed to our world view and educational approach . . ."

But most Israeli schools and educators incline neither to the criticism of Kurzweil nor to the dogmatic secularist certainties of Mapam. In what amounts to the "majority trend" of the public school system, teachers are free to express their own religious feelings and whatever doubts they have about the "official" approaches. These days a not infrequent complaint is heard, as reported in an article by a teacher in the Galilee: "Even nine- and ten-year-old children are capable of understanding the obvious contradiction—if there is no God and the Bible is only legend, what reason is there for devoting four lessons a week to the subject? . . . How can a pupil develop respect for the Bible when he is told—either directly or through clear hints—that it is based upon a lie?"

The complaining teacher concludes: "Whether we believe that God exists in his own right or that the people create its God—it is an unquestionable fact that the people have survived both in their own land and in the Diaspora by virtue of its collective engrossment with the idea of the God of Israel." The self-contradictory logic in this last statement reflects the problem of many Israeli teachers who are troubled by the difficulty of teaching the Bible without a "real" God—the *k'ilu*, the "as if" approach, as some call it in Israel. But they are unable to accept the criticism and conclusions of someone like Kurzweil. Most of them are not so sure that a people cannot maintain, as Kurzweil thinks, a strong pattern of moral standards without a belief in a transcendent God, or conversely, that a belief in such a God insures moral standards. Committed themselves to the "historic approach to the Bible" identified with Ahad Ha-am, they cannot joint in the criticism of Ben Gurion on this point; some of them, however, do quarrel with their leader's so-called "Bibliolatry."

"The distant past," wrote Ben Gurion in one of his frequent ideological epistles on the subject, "is closer to us than the recent past of the last two thousand years. . . . Our Father Abraham, his sons and grandsons; Moses and Aaron, King David—all they did and said is closer to us than the utterances of Rav Ashi, Alfasi, Maimonides, and the rest . . ."

It is this tendency to make light not only of the rabbinic interpretations of the Bible but of the spiritual productivity of the past two thousand years that impel some members of Mapai to accuse their leader of "Bibliolatry." The Prime Minister, they warn, is encouraging the already advanced tendency of the native-born Israeli to belittle the spiritual productivity of the Diaspora. It would be much better, suggest the critics, if he joined in a campaign for something sadly missing in the education of the native Israeli, something that has been called "Jewish consciousness."

By now the widely publicized phrase "Jewish consciousness" evokes some self-conscious smiles even on the part of the program's proponents. No one is quite sure what it means exactly, and what the "new look" in Jewish education is supposed to accomplish. Public explanations hint of "something" now missing in Israeli educa-

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tion which the "old-timers" received in their Diaspora background.

The committee engaged in developing the "Jewish consciousness" program in the schools defines its goals as a respect for "tradition and Jewish holidays," and for "the spiritual creativity of the last two millennia of Jewish history." But all along Israeli educators have been teaching Jewish holidays and traditions, and post-Biblical literature and history. Most of them are left wondering what this "Jewish consciousness" is supposed to add, except a little more folklore. Their wonderment is increased by assurances on the part of "Jewish consciousness" advocates that the new program will have nothing to do with "religion"—an announcement forestalling the obvious suggestion that this is the "something" now missing which was the basic ingredient of Jewish education in the past. In any case, with respect to the Bible, the program of "Jewish consciousness" as finally released to the press promised to make no change in "the historic approach," that is, the theologically non-committal "understanding" of the Bible.

According to the elaborately publicized final announcements, the Prime Minister was in accord with a program for increased "Jewish consciousness." But it was also clear that Ben Gurion defined the vague term simply as "a sense of unity with the Diaspora." The "Old Man," as Israelis like to call him, has not changed his belief that "though there may be precious jewels in post-Biblical literature, they are buried in accumulations of legalistic debates, quibbles, and mystical speculations which mean little to most people in our generation." The fact is, says Ben Gurion, that ". . . we who have come to settle in the Jewish state have taken a leap in time which makes us feel closer to David, Uzziah, and Joshua bin Nun than to the *shtetl* in Cracow or the 19th-century ideologists of Warsaw."

This is Ben Gurion's main point—that for the Israeli speaking Hebrew in the land of his fathers, Biblical references, whose pristine meaning has been blurred or allegorized, suddenly "leap through time." This is what happened, for example, in 1948, to a passage in Isaiah when the Prime Minister quoted it, while five Arab states began marching against reborn Israel:

Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garment like him that treadeth in the wine vat? I have trodden the wine press alone and of the people there was none with me. . . . For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my day of redemption was come; and I looked and there was none to help; and I wandered, and there was none to uphold; therefore my own arm brought salvation to me, and my fury, it upheld me.

Eliezer Sukenik translating the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls while his famous archaeologist son, Yigael Yadin, was in the field commanding the Israeli forces, described the same experience: "Shells and mortars pierced the air of Jerusalem day and night . . . little by little we unrolled the first fragments of the scrolls, and as we listened to faraway echos of an early period in the life of our people in this land, there were moments when the boundaries of time seemed blurred, as if the ancient scrolls were telling not of long ago events, but were pages of our own lives."

It is this identity of historic predicament along with language and land that makes Ben Gurion insist that: "The youth of Israel now looks at the Jewish people through the spectacles of the Jewish state and the Bible. . . ."

EVENTUALLY, all predictions about the meaning of the Bible in Israel lead to speculation about the native-born Israeli—the sabra. The present mélange of immigrant populations in Israel considers itself a transition generation. They have come from seventy different lands and cultures and in the main will live out their lives within their own ethnic communities. It is to the new generation, the sabra, that all eyes turn when speaking about Israel's spiritual future. There is no doubt in anybody's mind but that a "new Jew" is in the process of creation within Israel and the analysis of his character is something of a national pastime in Israel for everybody except the unanalyt-

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ical sabra himself. The mood of analysis varies with the nature of the particular crisis through which Israel happens to be passing at the moment. During the War of Independence, those who had been complaining previously about the "crudeness" and "toughness" of the sabra, suddenly saw these same qualities revealed as the primal, Biblical "courage and fighting stamina" without which the war would have been lost. But there are some characteristics of the sabra upon which all the analysts are agreed. The "new Jew" is more free than his Diaspora forebears of what Israelis call "inner problematics." He is supposed to have little patience with "involuted" thinking—intellectual pilpul. He has, says Martin Buber, a hunger for "mamashut"—the direct and concrete in life and literature. He will therefore read his Bible differently from the Jew who read it through the haze of his own "problematics" of existence and his immediate spiritual perspectives. Certainly, the pious orthodox Jew reading the story of David's adultery was bound to discover in the text a hint that Uriah contracted a "conditional divorce" with his wife, thereby saving the impetuous king from breaking the Ten Commandments. The Jew who visualized King David as a holier and more observant version of his own rabbi found it almost impossible to picture the lusty brigand and impetuous lover who appears in the Bible story to less pious eyes. Similarly, the words of Joshua—"Be strong and courageous"—spoken to the Israelites while they were battling their enemies, were interpreted by the powerless Jew in the Diaspora as a summons to be "strong as a lion" in fulfilling the 613 commandments of the Law, or storming the gates of Heaven with prayer. It would hardly have occurred to the pious Jew who shrank from a firm handshake on the grounds that physical strength belonged to "them"—the children of Esau—that Joshua's words could have the meaning they had during the Sinai campaign when whispered by a company commander to his troops at the moment of battle.

Ben Gurion's point is that only the Israeli, speaking the Biblical tongue in the land of his fathers, and sharing his ancestors' historic predicaments, can perceive the meaning of the Bible in its original form.

HERE we come to the decisive question in any speculation about the future "understanding" of the Bible in Israel. How will it be read by the native Israeli who has thrown away the "spectacles" of his Diaspora fathers?

A Haifa educator, Joseph Schechter, agrees that the sabra does not like an indirect or "blurred" approach to the meaning of the Scriptures. But that is not to say, argues Schechter, that he will be attracted by the "historic approach" so popular in Israel today. The sabra will not find satisfying, he claims, the explanation that emphasizes "the external manifestations of life, or the political, economic, historic, and scientific background of the Bible incidents. . . . This is the way which does not 'complicate' or threaten to involve the teacher in the personal lives of his pupils. The only serious approach to the Bible," says Schechter, "is one which brings the sabra into such immediate soul contact with Abraham, Moses, etc. that they direct him to actualize their values in his life." One of these values, perhaps the prime value, is what Schechter calls "existential energy."

"A community possessing great existential energy is equipped for the struggle with the phenomenon universally characterizing all human communities—the victory of death over life, the distintegration of existence—the phenomena of license, individualism, cynicism, lust, irony, boredom, emptiness, doubt, demonism, fetishism, ossification, 'inner death.'"

It is the quality of *oz*, usually translated as strength, but according to Schechter a term implying the manifest presence of God, a type of *manna* or life power, which Schechter sees as the main characteristic of the Biblical individual and community. This "existential energy" when linked with community needs becomes "responsibility—the key trait of a religious person's life."

As evidence that the sabra can understand

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this type of teaching of the Bible, Schechter points to some former pupils who for several years have been living as a non-Orthodox religious community, formerly in the hot Bet-Shan valley, and now in the rocky hills of Western Galilee. These native-born Israelis are trying to give all aspects of their life a religious dimension. The pattern of life which they have adopted is an eclectic mixture of Bible, Kierkegaard, Yoga, and Hasidism. Their silent meals on the Sabbath, their brief, fresh prayers, and the hours set aside for religious meditations, are an attempt to create an "indigenous" Israeli religious expression. Schechter's pupils are a small group with organizational problems so severe as to threaten their very existence. But they are important to consider, however, in speculating on the type of spirituality which may eventually "take" for the sabra.

Whatever happens to his group, who call themselves "Yuvalites," Schechter's claim is that the sabra in his "direct" Bible reading may not see at all what Ben Gurion sees. With all his talk about the "spectacles" of the Diaspora Jew, the Prime Minister seems to forget that he himself learned to read the Bible through the spectacles of "an ideology created in the Warsaw of sixty years ago." The fact is that through Ben Gurion's "spectacles" the Isaiah who cried out "Holy, holy, holy" becomes a modern-day statesman and political analyst and Joshua bin Nun, the "servant of the Lord," becomes a soldier-communal leader closely resembling the Prime Minister. In the same way, the "prophetic vision and Messianic ideal," so often quoted by the Israeli leader, are through his reading deprived of their other-worldly dimensions and compressed into a Messianism very much like the Mapai political program for Israel and the world. "He politicizes the Bible," is Martin Buber's complaint about Ben Gurion's reading. Ben Gurion's "leap of time" brings together a religious and secular age, and results in a blurring of terms and a Biblical interpretation as far removed from the "original" as the reading of rabbis like Zvi Yehuda Kook. It might even be argued that the latter is somewhat closer to the "original" than Ben Gurion, for at least he shares the belief in a living God which is certainly at the center of the Bible.

In summary, it might be said that most people in Israel, including those who complain about Diaspora "spectacles," find that the Bible's "coming to life" produces an uncomfortable blurring of terms and feelings. There is that mingling of the "holy and profane," the ideal and the real, which troubles pilgrims to the Holy Land, or the critics of the World Bible Quiz. Perhaps it is a necessary phase of any "coming to life," not only of the Bible but any spiritual or intellectual ideal.

One who thought most profoundly about this question was the late Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, and the father of Zvi Yehuda. As he watched the polarization of the Israeli community into religious and secularist camps, he could sympathize with the reluctance of some Orthodox Jews to use Hebrew for calling dogs, reading cartoons, or winning contests of any kind; the "holy tongue" cannot be used for "ordinary" matters without losing some of its sanctity. For an Orthodox rabbi and mystic, however, Rabbi Kook then asked a startling question: could the spiritual ever be "embodied" without such "de-spiritualization"? Can a heavenly Zion become earthly without the entrance of mundane sights and odors? Isaiah's dream about "making the desert to bloom" in its reality must lose something of its spiritual aura. The smell of sweat and the lack of toilet facilities in the Negev are not pleasant, but it is only to the accompaniment of such odors that the prophet's dream is realized.

The revival of a people, too, may be accompanied by some unpleasant phenomena. For, said the Chief Rabbi, the Jews during two thousand years of Diaspora existence had also in a sense been "disembodied." Indeed they had almost perished from "over-spiritualization." Power and muscles, elemental physical courage and stamina—the "gross" qualities were assigned to the "others,"

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the non-Jewish world. It was of course a matter of historic necessity. Cut off from their land, forced to surrender even the power of self-defense to Gentile rulers, Jews made a virtue of necessity, and looked for their life challenges in a narrower world. The result was a separation of the holy and the profane, with an amazing cultivation of the former. Not separation, however, but fusion of the holy and secular so that they become one—this is the real goal of Judaism, according to Rav Kook. Therefore the Jews had to regain their "animal qualities," become "thick" vessels—even like their Biblical forebears—so that they might contain similar "great spiritual charges." To be sure, in the process of "thickening," a people may temporarily swing from an excess of holiness to an excess of earthliness. It was natural for the new Israeli proudly to call himself "sabra," after the tough prickly-pear fruit of the land, and to honor the lad *k'eisen*—"like iron"—while scornfully labeling those who are squeamish about handling a rifle *artistim* —"artists."

In this process of "thickening," said Rav Kook, there might even be a growth of "God-denial," an increase of what the rabbis call *chutzpah*, a term that can be translated as "coarseness" or "nerve." But this was the "chutzpah that precedes the Messiah"—part of the dialectic by which the spirit enters into and transmutes the world. "And in the end," promised Rav Kook, "the profane will be swallowed up by the holy, and transmuted —then the holy will reign with a power and strength it did not have before." Thus Rav Kook evidently resolved his own ambivalences of feeling, and it may point the way for some others still.

But in Israel, all agree, there is a "new" Jew. If he is as impatient with "involuted" explanations as people say, he is not likely to be convinced by the cabbalistic dialectics of Rav Kook. Neither will he be content with Ben Gurion's attempt to identify a hypostatized national ego called the "Rock of Israel" with the living God of the Bible. For this "direct" sabra, the "coming to life" of the Bible may mean a confrontation not only with Biblical allusions suddenly becoming concrete, but with a question to which he will demand an unambivalent and equally concrete answer. Namely, is the religious experience which the Bible offers as the central reality in the life of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in the life of Joshua bin Nun *too*, still central to the life of any man—to the life of the sabra, as well?

Ben Gurion may be right in his sensing a kinship of spirit between the sabra and his Biblical forebears. They would seem to share an impatience with the "both-and" and a strong preference for the "either-or." Hence, the "coming to life" of the Bible may indeed result, as hopefully prophesied by Rav Kook, in the swallowing up of the profane by the holy. To be sure, those with less faith can conceive of the reverse. Then, paradoxically, the Bible "come to life" will have become less relevant than ever before to the life of the people in the Land of the Book.

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THE COURSE OF THE SOUTH

Descent into Barbarism?

ARNOLD M. ROSE

THE average American is inclined to believe that the separation of the races in the United States goes all the way back to the beginning of things—indeed, that segregation is "natural" and rooted in human instinct. The chief reason for thinking so is the "eternal" character which existing social arrangements seem to have for most people. A particularly American reason, perhaps, derives from the pervasive biological determinism of our culture: we assume that everything we do is grounded in our biological nature—"human nature," as we generally call it. I like to think that the corrective for this fallacy is a close reading of modern history, but I must admit that students can get an "A" for what they set down in blue-books and yet have no understanding of how the facts they memorize relate directly to their own lives. If I were to exaggerate this into a sociological law, I would say that there is a tendency for people to assume that contemporary times began roughly about the year of their own birth, and that between them and the rest of history stretches a wide gulf of time. "Old times" for me, I would hope, embrace Plato, Maimonides, and Theodore Roosevelt. For others they stop with Grant or Coolidge. Yet the fact is that history has "a present meaning," especially the history of that immediate past out of which our current institutions have risen.

PROFESSOR of sociology at the University of Minnesota, ARNOLD M. ROSE collaborated with Gunnar Myrdal in the writing of *An American Dilemma,* the classic study of the Negro in the United States. His own books include *Sociology: The Study of Human Relations* (1956). For COMMENTARY he has written "History with a Present Meaning" (December 1957) and "Automation and the Future Society" (March 1956).

The shocking fact that emerges from a series of recent books on racial segregation* is that one-third of our nation descended into a kind of barbarism from 1875 to 1915, and has not fully emerged yet. After establishing a public school system in the period of Reconstruction, the Southern states then proceeded to stifle it, so that many Southerners growing up before 1915 had little more education than a Russian peasant under the Czar. With exceptions, slaves were treated impersonally and on the whole not too badly before 1820. But after 1875 Negroes were the targets of violence, theft, and other forms of depredation. Before 1861 the South had taken steps, even if small ones, toward developing a literature, a political philosophy, a style of manners—in short, a civilization. But after 1875 all that was dropped—for its culture heroes it now chose such brutes as Cole Blease, James K. Vardaman, Ben Tillman, Tom Watson, Hoke Smith, and a score of others, latter-day examples of which are Theodore Bilbo and Eugene Talmadge.

In this rapid, almost deliberate descent into barbarism, many individuals seemed still bravely to maintain the high aspirations of the ante-bellum South: conservative gentlemen of the old school like C. Harrison Parker, editor of the New Orleans *Picayune,* and Senator Wade Hampton of South Carolina, as well as educated prophets of the new industrialism like Henry Grady. But when it came to making a determined stand for

**The Negro Question, a Selection of Writings on Civil Rights in the South,* by George W. Cable, edited by Arlin Turner (Doubleday); *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915,* by Louis R. Harlan (University of North Carolina Press); *The Southern Heritage,* by James McBride Dabbs (Knopf); *Desegregation: Resistance and Readiness,* by Melvin Tumin (Princeton University Press).

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decency, fair play, and civilization, they succumbed. Virtually the sole exception was the novelist George W. Cable, and his life story has something of the horror of a sane man more and more beset on every side by lunatics. The mental disease that dragged the South down was, of course, racism. As Booker T. Washington, in one of his franker moments, put it: if the white South wanted to keep the Negro in the gutter, it had to get down there with him.

A fanatically loyal Southerner himself, a veteran of the "War between the States," a novelist who achieved almost unparalleled popular acclaim in the South, Cable yet managed to retain his decency and civilized intelligence. In speeches, letters to the editor, published essays, and stories, he tried to warn his fellow Southerners against what was happening. They ignored him, misunderstood him, laughed at him, berated him, and eventually he moved to the North. Arlin Turner, his editor, lists Cable's themes, partly in the novelist's own words, as follows:

"The safety of society lies in the elevation of the masses." "The Negro must be educated as the South is reconstructed." ". . . if they could realize what millions of solid public wealth it is costing to suppress the self-regard and aspirations of one-third of their whole population." There is no such thing as social equality; private social affairs will remain within the choice of individuals. "The public school relation is not a private social relation." "I have never yet spoken first in this matter, save under the conviction that silence was treason to the South. It is treason." The best minds must study the problem; there must be free, open discussion without any kind of real or implied threat. Restrictions aimed at the Negro fall only slightly less heavily on the poor white, especially in public education. The Negro must never himself draw the color line. All questions must be referred to the will of the majority, not of any minority. No two races have ever amalgamated except when one was the oppressor.

IN MANY ways Cable was not what we would call a "racial liberal" today. He believed that Negroes were inferior (though not all of them), and that, in accordance with biological determinism, the inferiority was inherited. He thought that racial antipathy was instinctive. He stressed his own Southernness, although he hoped the term "The South" would disappear. But he wanted white Southerners to behave like gentlemen toward the "helpless race." He believed the white South could extend civil rights to the Negro—even maintain the unsegregated schools established under Reconstruction—without having "social relations" with Negroes. At first he thought he was speaking for many gentlemanly whites who had been bullied into silence by noisy agitators; at first he considered himself the spokesman of "the silent South," as he entitled one of his books. Gradually he realized that he was alone. "When the whole intellectual energy of the Southern states flew to the defense of that one institution which made us the South, we broke with human progress. We broke with the world's thought."* He showed how all the institutions of the South—economic, political, legal, familial, educational, artistic—were distorted, and debased to maintain the caste system.

Look at the South. What say the world's employment-hunting capital and labor, when we ask them why they turn aside from her? They reply, not in reproach; only in kindliest explanation. But what say they? That she has legislatures a hundred years old, but often no adequate popular reverence for law; that she has judges and courts, but often no patience to wait for their decrees or honor their mandates; that her frightful prisons defend neither the criminal's rights nor those of society; that her provisions for public education will not bear comparison with that of any region bidding successfully for immigration; that her agricultural system is characterized by an ignorance and waste that keeps the husbandman degraded and poor on a soil that ought to make him rich; that her factories and furnaces are short of skilled labor and her millers and ironmasters wedded to the delusion of low pay and long hours; that the curricula of her colleges are antiquated and almost completely innocent of civics and economics; that in whole states the laws so one-sidedly protect the landlord, creditor, and mortgagee that they work intensely toward the perpetuation of the landlessness, penury, unthrift, supineness, and vice of the laboring masses. A greedy expansion of the mortgage

*Cable, "Literature in the Southern States" (1882), an essay in the volume previously cited.

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system to movable property, standing crops, and even crops unplanted—nay, to the very household larder—has strangled in its birth the personal credit of the liberated slave, and persists in the ruinous effort to dispense with the necessity of his being honest.*

It still comes as a shock to realize that one-third of our country has been emerging from near-barbarism only in the past thirty years—and not only in matters of race. Thus the South clung stubbornly to its agricultural economy, resisting efforts at industrialization despite its great natural resources and the offer of capital from the North. It often placed bullies and brutes in the highest political office. It disfranchised its poorer whites by such measures as the poll tax, so that only 5 per cent of the adult whites voted in Mississippi as late as 1940. And there was no secret ballot in most of the Southern states. Lynching and vigilantism found many white as well as Negro victims. Courts paid little attention to the strict requirements of the law, and the police even less. The convict-lease system operated throughout the South until the murder of an innocent North Dakota white boy shocked the nation.† The chain gang is still to be found, despite unfavorable national publicity in the 1930's. Public welfare standards in the South are much below those of the rest of the nation. Forest fires are started by backward rural folk, apparently for no other reason than frustration and boredom.

Perhaps the most significant indication of the South's backwardness was the virtual absence of a compulsory free public school system until about 1915. This is documented in scholarly detail, state by state, in Louis R. Harlan's *Separate and Unequal*. When gradually (1901-1915) the Southern states adopted laws providing for compulsory, four-month-term public schools, the stimulation and some of the funds came from Northern philanthropists. The state laws made no mention of race, since the Constitution prohibited it, but the local school boards diverted most of the sums they received for Negro schools to the white schools. The gulf between what white children and Negro children got in the way of education increased steadily until 1930, since which time it has diminished somewhat, mainly due to Federal court pressure. As late as 1920 a Federal census monograph could report that "Evidence is plentiful that the compulsory attendance laws for this region are largely inoperative as concerns Negro children."

THE South began gradually moving forward after 1920. Factories have gone up in many areas and farming is now being done by less primitive methods. The quality of many of the top political leaders has risen markedly. The barriers to voting were lowered for whites when the Federal courts rendered illegal the more formal limitations on Negro voting. The courts began, in some areas, to provide a minimum legal protection for Negroes, and simultaneously the state legislatures passed laws which gave more protection to both whites and Negroes against mobs and vigilantes. Public welfare standards were raised somewhat, largely because of the Federal New Deal, which also began a measure of slum clearance. Peonage, the convict-lease system, and other institutions unknown to civilized societies were abolished. The eight-month school year has become universal, and compulsory education up to the age of twelve or fourteen (enforced at least for white children) has been adopted

*Cable, "What the Negro Must Learn" (1891), volume cited. This was just about the last honest evaluation of the South to come out of the region until the relatively recent writings (1930's) of W. J. Cash and Howard Odum.

†"In January 1922, a young North Dakota farm boy was beaten to death by the half-drunk overseer of a lumber camp in Florida. Off for his first look at the world, 22-year-old Martin Tabert had been arrested by the sheriff of Leon County, Florida, shortly before Christmas for riding a freight train. He was charged with vagrancy and convicted. Money sent from home to pay his fine was returned with the note 'party gone.' Tabert was shipped off to serve his 90 days working for a private lumber company in the pine forests in Dixie county. For supplying this labor, it was later shown, the company paid the sheriff $20 per head. The system of leasing convict labor to private concerns was—despite its abuses—well established in the South. But the Tabert case made it a national scandal." (*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 30, 1958.)

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by all states. Three or four of the state institutions of higher learning now deserve the name of university. This list of changes could be considerably lengthened. In most respects, the South can now be considered to have caught up with the rest of America.

But will it last? The same force that dragged the South down in the 19th century —racism—is again active. It is more than Northerners can believe that the South would tolerate the abolition of public schools, but many Southern parents have themselves never had the advantage of public schools so that a school-less society is quite within their experience. Governor Faubus obtained the defeat of Congressman Brooks Hays, who was no integrationist but a civilized man —will Faubus use a similar tactic against Senator Fulbright when the latter is up for reelection in 1962? Industry has been developing in Arkansas, but a recent report shows a sharp decline in new investment since the beginning of the school troubles. Do Arkansans care, or will they just as soon see their surplus laborers go back to scratching a living from the soil, or migrate out of the state? Mississippi and a few other Deep Southern states have devised new techniques to prevent even educated Negroes from voting, and shortly these techniques will be turned against poor whites too. Organizations pledged to violence have sprung up to put Negroes "in their place"; soon enough they will want to put everybody in their place, as already evidenced by the bombing of Jewish temples. Will the South again retrogress to barbarism? The evidence shows that since 1955 it has taken some steps in that direction.

The problem was never simply a Negro problem, and it is less so today than ever. A little more than half the Negroes of the country remain in the South, as compared to 95 per cent as late as 1914, and Negroes continue to move out rapidly. The problem is one of racist ideology. As we learned from the German experience of 1933-1945, it is not necessary to have large numbers of a minority group around to keep racism at a vigorous pitch. Racism was never basically weakened in the South, and now it is again active. A set of demonstrably false beliefs about biological inheritance, it can probably only be eliminated by changing the social institutions which sustain and reinforce it. The key racist institution is, of course, public segregation in its various forms. The border states (Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia), once having abandoned public segregation, show no signs of retrogression. Even if the Deep South reverts, the Supreme Court decision of 1954—by removing segregation's legal foundation —will have to its credit the saving of the border states and probably Tennessee, North Carolina, Texas, and Florida as well.

THERE are numerous forces working to preserve Southern civilization. First, there are the South's new institutions: industrial capitalism, national unions, the extended franchise and democratically elected political leaders, the public school system, a number of real universities, some strong courts and modern police systems, some nationally oriented newspapers and radio-TV stations with national hook-ups. Secondly, there are some Southerners who—while not "liking Negroes" —have some understanding of the damage done by racism and segregation. A study of a group of these people in one North Carolina county has been reported by Melvin Tumin in *Desegregation: Resistance and Readiness*. The group is composed mostly of professionals and other white collar workers, the better educated, the ones most exposed to the mass media, the ones who feel most a part of the general society. At present, few of these people are doing anything but standing by and thinking about the problem, but it is possible that they can make their presence felt on the Southern scene. Thirdly, the North and West seem less willing today than they were in 1875 to let the South backslide. The countervailing force in the North is not love or even sympathy for the Negro, but recognition of damage to the whole nation if the South remains economically and educationally backward. Finally, there are a goodly number of G. W. Cables today among

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Southerners who are trying to talk sense to their fellow regionalists. I do not mean the professional "Southern liberals" who bend with the winds of local opinion and who use an educated charm to fool Northerners into believing that the South is really no different from the rest of the country. I am referring to those who see the realities of Southern history and the South today.

One such is James McBride Dabbs, president of the Southern Regional Council. He starts his revealing book, *The Southern Heritage,* by confessing to a good deal of confusion, and demonstrating same in the opening chapters (perhaps confusion is the reason why many other civilized Southerners have not yet become active in defense of their civilization). But he realizes the basic fact that the South "hesitates now between the past and the future," and that all Southerners must make their choice or the choice will be made for them. It is impossible to maintain "a changeless social order in a changing world."

Dabbs loves the South: "If only she could have avoided giving status to race, I can't imagine how happy her history might have been." He explains the present psychology of the South as, in part, a fear of losing the old agrarian values and amenities because of industrialization. "Our vague realization of this makes us uneasy; we are afraid, and properly, that we are losing something. Finding segregation under attack, we defend it as our life. Is it really? Might we possibly win this battle and lose the war?" He lists the reasons why "an increasing number of white Southerners" wish to abandon segregation: they grow tired of carrying two sets of manners (one for the whites, the other for the Negroes); they grow tired of the segregation pattern itself and of the superior-inferior philosophy of life which it expresses; they are aware that the world is moving ahead at rapid speed and the South cannot participate in progress and still maintain the pre-modern institution of segregation. He believes that even race relations have gotten better since 1954; they seem to have "grown worse only in the sense that they have been diminished; some communication has been lost; but this diminishing is the necessary preliminary to the substitution of other and better relations. Better because truer to the facts. The old interracial manners are rapidly breaking down; the new are being slowly instituted."

Is this thoughtful Southerner a prophet? Or is he a contemporary George W. Cable, who also thought he was speaking for the civilized South but lived to see it decline, his warnings utterly ignored.

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FERMENT IN FRANCO SPAIN

The Prospects of the Opposition

BOGDAN RADITSA

TWENTY years ago, on March 28, 1939, Madrid fell to Franco's armies and Spain's short-lived Republic came to an end. In three years of civil war marked by intervention by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Soviet Russia, a million people were killed, and many more millions (Spain's population then was about twenty-six million) were maimed or wounded. Tens of thousands of Republican militants fled the country; other thousands were imprisoned for long terms. The spiritual and physical exhaustion following that conflict has been chiefly responsible for the social peace of the last two decades. During these years, Franco shifted from alliance with the Axis powers, to isolated neutrality, to military cooperation with the United States; he transformed a fascist regime into a reactionary absolutism, buttressed by the army and the Roman Catholic Church; and he moved from "corporative" economic schemes, to encouragement of private business, to a corrupt form of statism. Hatred of Franco's regime was general, but the fear of another civil war restrained the men and women who witnessed the carnage of 1936-39.

The army, the Church hierarchy, and the land-owning grandees won the civil war, and rule Spain today. Among the defeated there remains a feeling of profound failure. One Catalan Socialist told me: "Our lives stopped with the end of the Republic. We have been dead souls since Franco took over. Our failure leaves a scar that can never be healed." When I invited a Spanish intellectual couple to an elegant Madrid restaurant, the wife (a novelist whose books are refused publication) looked around at the porcine rich men and their vociferous wives, and said: "I feel exiled in my own country. This is not the Spain we dreamed of in the 30's."

Yet a new generation has grown up in Spain, and the traveler soon senses the gulf between those young men and women under forty and their elders. The first decade after the civil war was marked by spiritual lassitude. Then, as the international isolation of Spain came to an end, "reformist" tendencies slowly emerged among the lesser government officials and especially in the universities—whose teachers were responsive to the critical spirit of the postwar students. In the early 50's, such men as the poet and one-time Falangist, Dionisio Ridruejo, a former Minister of Education, Joaquin Ruiz Jimenez, and Madrid University Rector Pedro Lain Entralgo began to urge social reforms and a slow transition to civil liberty and constitutional government.

Franco made little response to these proposals. In the fall of 1955, however, numerous minor incidents attested to the restiveness of Spanish youth. When Ortega y Gasset died, one thousand Madrid university students paraded at his funeral, bearing the placard: "To José Ortega y Gasset, Spaniard, philosopher, and liberal." In February 1956, there were three days of violent skirmishes between students and armed Falangists on the university grounds. Hundreds of students were at first arrested; about twenty remained in jail. The following month, a group of

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WELL known for his articles on Eastern Europe, BOGDAN RADITSA has also followed Spanish politics closely for three decades. He has known most of its intellectual leaders, and visited Spain three times: in 1940, in 1957, and last year. In a recent issue, the Latin American journal *Cuadernos* published his correspondence with the philosopher Unamuno. Mr. Raditsa, a professor of history at Fairleigh Dickinson University, contributed "Milovan Djilas: The Search for Justice" to our August 1958 number.

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older state officials and intellectuals were arrested, charged with the organization of resistance groups and the editing of clandestine leaflets. José Maria Gil Robles, who had headed the rightist Catholic party under the Republic, appeared as their defense counsel. This old-line conservative, who in his time had done much to pave the way for Franco, now declared: "When a regime denies its citizens the normal means of expression, they have the right to resort to whatever means are within their grasp."

As a result of such incidents Franco in 1957 reshuffled his government, downgrading the Falange and giving great power to the Catholic Opus Dei. But student unrest has continued, and has gained the support of more and more of the respectable older citizens. In January and May 1958, for example, the police rounded up large groups of students as "Communists" or "Socialists." A petition in their defense was signed by twenty-five priests, including Franco's own chaplain. One of the priests told me that the arrested students were in fact liberal democrats, some of them practicing Catholics. Last November, there was a new wave of arrests in Madrid, Barcelona, and San Sebastian, this time aimed at older intellectuals and middle-class people.

YET it is among the young people that open resistance first appeared, and it is they who seem most eager for immediate change. Young people in Madrid and Barcelona today seem as Americanized in their fashions and behavior as those in Paris, Rome, and Hamburg. Old family ties are being loosened, the rigid morals of the Church are dissolving, thousands of cars and buses cross the Pyrenees daily, bringing cosmopolitan tourists and their ways to Spain's great cities. But Madrid and Barcelona, which are modern-looking cities with great new luxury apartment dwellings, are not typical. The rest of the country has just begun to experience the industrial revolution; Spain, Portugal, and Greece are the poorest countries in non-Communist Europe.

The enormous Iberian plateau, scorched by a broiling sun, lacks adequate rainfall, and the irrigation system is primitive. Tractors and threshing machines are practically unknown. Men, women, children, and skinny burros till and harvest the land much as they did in the days of the Moors. There are poor, small farms in the north, but agriculture in the south is dominated by the great *latifundia,* worked by *peones* and *braceros* who must struggle to earn 50 pesetas ($1) a day. More than 1.5 million Spaniards are landless agricultural laborers, and they form at least 40 per cent of the farm population in such areas as Andalusia, Toledo, and Valencia. The great estates which they till are owned, for the most part, by the old grandees (the Dukes of Alba and Medina Celli, the Duchess of Montoro, etc.), who refuse to use tractors or modern harvesting methods because they think this would produce unemployment and peasant unrest.

Spain is not the fertile France of the 18th century or the rapidly industrializing England of the 19th. A simple agrarian reform that distributed the land among the peasants would not provide the individual farmer with enough good soil. Spanish agriculture today barely feeds the country's rising population, and it would take years for new machinery and fertilizers to begin to boost production substantially. Moreover, new industries are not at hand to absorb the surplus farm population; indeed, Spain exports seasonal workers and miners to France and the Low Countries.

The urban population is somewhat better off than the peasantry, though white-collar employees usually have to hold two or three jobs to make ends meet. Per capita income in Spain is $346 a year (as compared to about $250 before the civil war), but figures are deceptive because of the rising inflation since 1951. There is little doubt, however, that the skilled industrial workers and miners in Asturia, Bilbao, Barcelona, Madrid, and Estramadura have improved their standard of living; their progress has not, by any means, matched that of workers in, say, West Germany and Northern Italy, but it is tangible.

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Because of this relative prosperity, and because the most militant working-class leaders either died in the civil war or went into exile, the numerous strikes which have taken place in Spain have not had a political character. There has been little contact between the workers and those intellectuals, officials, and students who comprise the "political" opposition to Franco. Some of the workers' economic gains have resulted from the initiative of the Falangist-controlled trade unions, and thus the workers fear a monarchical restoration, which seems the immediate aim of Franco's middle-class critics. In this respect, the situation suggests that of Argentina during and after the Peron era, when the mass of workers were unsympathetic to the intellectuals, businessmen, and army officers who finally unseated the dictator.

Bankers and businessmen are, indeed, among the chief critics of Franco, and the main source of their discontent is the atmosphere of favoritism and corruption which pervades the Spanish economy. As in Argentina, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere, a "new class" of managers, directors, and bureaucrats has emerged which derives its economic privileges from politics. Some leading members of this class are Franco's relatives; his brother Nicholas, for example, is president of the local Renault plant and numerous other corporations. Import licenses, which must all be cleared through government officials in Madrid, are a large source of corruption. There are also contrived "shortages" of coffee, sugar, potatoes, from which black-marketeers with government connections profit. A "financial scandal" last fall revealed that high government officials were among those Spaniards who had deposited nearly $400 million in Swiss banks alone.

IN SPEAKING with the Spanish intellectuals who are Franco's chief critics, one immediately becomes conscious of a trait that is almost part of the national character, a disregard for the details of material reality that is at once Spain's eternal charm and its tragedy. A postwar slang expression, *gana,* conveys this quality. The word can be translated as pleasure, fancy, caprice. Its spirit is personalist, non-conformist, anti-bourgeois. *Cada uno hace lo que le da gana:* each man must behave according to his own *gana.* On the dark highway, a cyclist rides without night lights: *"No me da la gana"*—I don't feel like having them! A fisherman on the Costa del Sol takes a sunbath at midday when he could be fishing and getting a catch.

Competitive business, rush, the tension of work hardly seem to exist in Spain. The middle classes still cling to their long siestas after lunch and their ceremonious dinners late at night. Among the poor, the holy day of every saint and all the feastdays of the Virgin are celebrated with great ceremony, both the evening before and the day itself. The bullfights, held every Thursday and Sunday, also take up two full days each: the day before in betting, and the day of the fight itself in watching the *corridas.*

The Spain of the mid-20th century, is not, of course, the Spain of El Greco or even of Goya. It has had a minority tradition of liberal dissent since the French Revolution, a tradition which created the Republic of the 1930's. Even today, the land produces not only philosophers and avant-garde poets but technicians, statisticians, and even child psychologists. Yet, in speaking with Spanish intellectuals and political figures, you begin to realize how much of the country's medievalism has survived. In many ways, the pragmatic spirit of the modern West, with its respect for fact, experiment, and compromise, has only begun to take hold.

"We have always been vague, abstract, mystical," I was told by Professor Enrique Tierno Galvan, a sociologist who is one of the country's few realistic political thinkers, "but forty years under the influence of our great teacher Ortega, who brought German philosophy here, made us even more so. Everything became ambiguous. Catholicism is ambiguous—everyone goes to church, but few really believe in it. Everybody talks against Franco, but few are ready to act against his regime."

Poetry and literature remain the vehicles of political protest, as is often the case under

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a repressive regime. "Poetry meetings," organized by Ridruejo and Lain Entralgo in various parts of Spain, have served to draw dissident intellectuals together. Each Wednesday evening at the Insula Library in Madrid, writers and intellectuals, young and old, gather to discuss literature, art, philosophy, and—inevitably—politics. And almost any day, around café tables in Madrid, Barcelona, Santander, and Seville, writers, poets, critics, and artists discuss, till the early hours of the morning, the latest ideas of Paris, Rome, New York. The atmosphere resembles that of Russia a half-century ago, and of Eastern Europe between the two world wars.

The leaders of the Spanish intellectual community, who must be classed as moderates in Western terms though they are considered rebels in Franco Spain, are still under the philosophical influence of Miguel de Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset and their living descendants, Salvador de Madariaga and Dr. Gregorio Marañon. But their philosophies, which are removed from any sort of concern with social and economic realities, fail to address themselves to Spain's basic question: how to modernize this medieval authoritarian society. Many Spanish intellectuals today, like Tierno Galvan, are attracted to the pragmatic and empirical philosophies of the Anglo-Saxon countries; others look to Marxism. An impressive group of young Catholics are followers of Jacques Maritain; others are influenced by the philosophers Julian Marias and José Luis Aranguren, who preach a "revolutionary Christianity."

Nevertheless, the Spanish intellectuals as a whole seem romantic and imprecise in their approach to social problems. Most of them view the conquest of power as almost the sole political issue, and resist practical questions about what *they* would do to raise living standards and modernize the country if they had power.

"We need institutes and research organizations," Tierno Galvan told me, "to study our social and economic problems in a scientific, practical way; to study the agrarian problem, the social structure of the working class and white-collar people, and so on. We have never done anything along these lines, and most of our people don't know how to go about it. Our universities are too old; they do not care about such things. Nobody has a plan for any of these things except the Communists."

On the land question, for example, the Communists advocate collectives. The liberals are divided. There are those who believe in agrarian reforms to promote the growth of an independent class of small farmers, others who believe in voluntary cooperatives; still others believe that the land problem will only be solved through rapid industrialization. Not only are the non-Communists divided among themselves; but their division is emotional, rooted in their ideological taste rather than in a pragmatic knowledge of the needs and possibilities of Spanish agriculture. And, if a practical spirit does not emerge in consideration of economic issues, its moderating effect can hardly be felt in the discussion of such explosive non-economic issues as clericalism, which has been synonymous with Spain since the Inquisition.

ROMAN Catholicism has always stood at the center of Spanish society. If today there is any hope for the Spanish future, it lies in the schism which has at last appeared within a Church which for centuries identified itself with privilege and reaction. The hierarchy, for the most part, continues to collaborate with Franco to an extent that embarrasses even the Vatican. But there is a new and very different spirit among the younger clergy.

The leaders of the Spanish clergy believe they have "saved" Catholicism three times in the last four hundred years: from the Reformation, from the French Revolution, and from socialism in the days of the Spanish Republic. Having performed such historic feats, the Spanish hierarchy is largely undisturbed by the postwar rise of Christian Democratic movements in Western Europe. Traditional Spanish Catholicism is exemplified by the Spanish landowner who heard a professor at the Catholic University of Sevile

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quote Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum,* recommending distribution of land among the peasants. "If such are the ideas of the Holy Father," cried the landowner, "then I shall become a Protestant."

The Church monopolizes Spain's educational system, and, as in feudal times, the Church and the monastic orders own and run large estates, students' hostels, and schools of every conceivable kind. Some of the orders—the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans particularly—are rich enough to control the economic life of whole regions, such as Castile. They are building new monasteries, churches, and schools equipped with all the latest conveniences; low-cost housing is not being built. An enormous Benedictine monastery, with a private bath for every cell, has been constructed in the Guadarrama mountains, overlooking the Valle de los Caidos; it will stand just below Franco's intended resting place, the national Civil War Memorial, in which all the dead of the war are now being buried, and which is topped by a gigantic marble crucifix visible all over Castile.*

The most recent bulwark of Franco's regime is the Opus Dei, which its critics describe as a reactionary Catholic lay masonry. Its guide is a book called *Camino* ("The Way") by Father J. M. Escriva, which urges members "to restore to Spain her ancient grandeur of saints, wise men, and heroes." The book stresses the *Caudillo* theme: "Leaders! . . . make your will power virile so that God makes you a leader . . . you are made to lead. . . ."

Opus Dei is most interested in monopolizing Spanish intellectual life. It already controls the Spanish academy of arts and sciences, the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones, and its strong representation in the government since 1957 has given it a decisive role in the censorship. Religious censorship in Spain is even more thoroughgoing than political censorship. The *Syllabus of Errors* is seriously observed. Bookstores are prohibited from carrying Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* or Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life* and *The Agony of Christianity,* although such books can be had under the counter. The censorship goes far beyond politics and philosophy; creative writers often produce two versions of the same novel, an authentic one and one that will pass the clerical censor. The latter version must be skillful, indeed. One young writer who described the awakening of a young girl, and her joy at watching the sunrise, found his manuscript red-penciled with the comment: "A young Spanish girl, on arising, kneels and prays to the Holy Virgin."

YET Spanish Catholicism is no longer monolithic. At the recent College of Cardinals, the Spanish Primate, Dr. Enrique Pla y Daniel, refused till the end to vote for Cardinal Roncalli (by common report the candidate of "liberal" France), but the Cardinals of Tarragon and Santiago did on the last ballots contribute to the majority which chose him as Pope John XXIII. Among the vocal or silent critics of Franco's regime are clergymen as highly placed as the Bishop of Saragossa, and the Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Monserrat, Father Aureli M. Escarre. (I name these two because they have already been identified in the public press as critics of Franco; there are others, whose names are best withheld.) Men of this stamp are seriously concerned about the consequences of the Church's close alliance with Franco's dictatorship. "If we are killed and our churches and monasteries burned again," one high clergyman told me in the shadow of his medieval cathedral, "we will have only ourselves to blame. We will deserve it because we have done nothing to avoid it." Another told me he expected "terrible days."

The younger clergy are more than fearful. They are opposed to Franco, and many do not hesitate to call themselves revolutionaries. I met such young priests and monks in

*A mountain of granite had to be excavated to build this memorial, which will cost more than $200 million and has provoked widespread grumbling. Friends and relatives of the fallen soldiers, who for the most part had been buried near their home communities, objected strenuously to the disinterment of their dear ones.

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village parishes, in the towns, and on the university campuses of Madrid and Barcelona. They have read Marx as well as Maritain, and in their homes I often met young socialists and even anarcho-syndicalists.

The young prelates accuse the Church hierarchy of abandoning the most elementary Christian ideas, and consider Spain's ecclesiastical institutions antiquated and corrupted by petty politics. They further condemn the Church hierarchy for its behavior under the Republic. Unjustified fear of liberalism, they say, led the Church to consistent disloyalty to the secular state and produced the great Spanish "division." Had the Church worked for moderate solutions within the secular Republican framework between 1931 and 1936, there would have been no civil war. The young priests rejected the view, held by Madariaga and other exiled moderates, that the Church legitimately feared persecution by the Spanish left. No, the young priests told me; the Church and the army from the start viewed the Republic as their enemy and forced the Republic to fight them. Some of these priests are willing to countenance the expropriation of the Church's great wealth and an end to its monopoly of the school system.

These young priests, however, form only the left wing of dissident Catholic opinion in Spain. They are supported by most Catholic social workers, who have encountered the bitter anti-clericalism of the poor and hope to persuade the workers that Christianity can promote social justice. Their heroes are the frequently arrested law professor Jiminez Fernandez, an authority on agrarian reform, and the Jesuit Father Llanos, who is considered a kind of Spanish Abbé Pierre. The centrist Catholics are grouped around Gil Robles, who hopes to restore the monarchy and to establish a broadly-based, middle-road Christian Democratic party. The leader of the dissident Catholic right is the former Foreign Minister, Martin Artajo, who associates with such people as Otto Hapsburg and is detested by the center as well as the left-wing Catholics, and by the youth. Still farther right, of course, and most powerful of all, are the hierarchs who support Franco and encourage Opus Dei.

The intersection of dissident and pro-Franco feeling in the Church is illustrated by a recent incident. When a factory in Campozano (Santander) fired a number of workers without compensation, the parish priest appealed for contributions to help the needy workers. The Bishop, with the government's blessing, dismissed the priest as a "Communist" and sent him to a monastery.

FRANCO, I was told by two bishops who know him intimately, views his subjects with pessimism. Contemptuous of his colleagues as well as opponents, he thinks he alone can subdue the passion of the *hombre della calle*, the man in the street. Moderate reform, he believes, would spawn social conflict, arson, and mass murder. Although he once promised to retire, he now intends to rule the rest of his life. He is now sixty-six and in good health.

Franco's methods are those of a canny medieval monarch rather than those of the charismatic 20th-century dictators. Spanish intellectuals like to quote Ortega's description: "a dictatorship sweetened by corruption." Although his efficient police force is organized on the Himmler model, Franco distrusts mass terror and refuses to make martyrs of his opponents. First, he tries to buy them off. If that does not succeed, he arrests them; if prison fails to change their outlook, he threatens them with an "accident." Dionisio Ridruejo told me that when he first became dissillusioned with Franco's regime, he was offered a job as cultural attaché in the United States, at a salary of $2,000 a month. He refused, was arrested, then released with a warning that an "accident" might follow. In 1958 he was arrested again and brought to trial. An overflow crowd of more than five hundred people packed the streets outside the court—a clear manifestation of solidarity with the "Spanish Djilas." Inside, however, the state prosecutor, who had originally asked for an eighteen-year prison sentence, now recommended an eighteen-month term. Ridruejo then was granted the

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benefit of an amnesty proclaimed on the coronation of the new Pope. The emotional tension subsided.

On Franco's death, the Council of the Realm is empowered to choose a new chief of state, either a prince of royal blood or another Spaniard at least thirty years old. The understanding is that the Council would choose either Don Juan Bourbon y Parma, son of Alfonso XIII who was deposed in 1931, or his young son Don Carlos, who is being trained in Spanish military and naval academies. Don Juan lives comfortably in Estoril, Portugal, on a handsome allowance from the Spanish government and advises his followers to be patient. He is regarded, even by monarchists, as unintelligent and lacking both force and charm.

Whoever becomes king—so go the plans of the government—the army would be empowered to continue Franco's policies. The Spanish army, a frustrated force which has lost all its foreign wars since the decline of the Spanish Hapsburgs in the 17th century, traditionally directs its strength against the native intelligentsia. Under Franco, army generals and colonels hold lucrative positions in the central and local governments. Officers' salaries have been raised, barracks rebuilt, army installations modernized. A recent law enables higher officers to retire with full pay at any age and gives them statutory priority in filling government or private jobs; they can thus draw two full salaries at the same time. And, though there may be new ideas among the younger officers, such generals as Jorge Vigon, often mentioned as Franco's likely heir, believe that only a "traditional," clerical, anti-democratic monarchy can save Spain from the baneful influences of the West.

ELSEWHERE within Franco's regime there is little material for alternative leadership. The Spanish Cabinet contains no independent personalities; the ministers are treated like errand boys. In February 1957, for example, Artajo, who had been Foreign Minister for eleven years, was dismissed by the Minister for the Presidency, Luis Carrero Blanco, in a two-minute telephone conversation. Received by Franco three days later, he was told: "Thank you for the services you rendered to Spanish diplomacy," and that was that. The Cortes, a legislature with five hundred appointed deputies, also exists on Franco's sufferance.

Largely because there is no recognized moderate leader within the ruling framework in Spain, an immediate restoration of the monarchy seems the main hope of Franco's liberal opponents. But there are monarchists and monarchists. General Vigon heads one monarchist group, the Acción Española, which expects a restoration to provide legitimacy for the continuation of Franco's policies; Vigon's closest collaborator is Marquis José Ignacio Valdiglesias, another close friend of Otto Hapsburg. There are also monarchists in the Opus Dei organization (like Calvo Serer), who hope that a monarchy will continue them as leading forces in the Spanish government.

Finally, there are the independent monarchists who regard a restoration as the first step toward a more liberal, constitutional regime. Many monarchists of this type have rallied behind the Unión Española, a coalition backed by several leading industrialists whose chief intellectual spokesmen are Ridruejo and Tierno Galvan. They have obtained the cooperation of Gil Robles and also of Fernando Alvarez de Miranda, who is Spain's principal advocate of European federation. Although a few anarchists and syndicalists have also backed this group, the Socialists have remained aloof. The party's leaders in exile, Indalecio Prieto and Luis Araquistain, are hesitant about collaboration with men who opposed the Republic. The workers generally fear a monarchy supported by leaders of private business.

Nor does there appear to be any link between the Unión Española and the students. Though some of the most popular professors in Spain support this group, the students themselves are more radically inclined, and also much readier to collaborate with the Communists. The latter, of course, are the chief advocates of a "broad, united front,"

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and their gift for clandestine operations enables them to become leaders in such fronts.

Always the best organized group under a dictatorship, the Communists in Spain receive aid and direction from the powerful sister party of France, which ships in literature, money, and personnel. On one level, the Communists are aiming to capture the widespread nationalistic spirit which is directed against the United States. At the same time, they assert that only Communism can modernize Spain. They are using all the old familiar stratagems, including sending ideologists to the prisons to recruit other prisoners for the party. The jail at Burgos, I have been told, is Spain's equivalent of the Royal Yugoslav penitentiary at Mitrovica, where the Communist prisoner Moshe Pijade during the 1930's set up a celebrated "Communist university."

The growth of Communism in Spain is to a large extent a measure of popular disillusion with the Western powers and particularly with the United States, which has collaborated with the Franco government for the past six years. The most visible result of that collaboration is a vast improvement in the Spanish road system, which has opened the door to more than a million tourists.

Since 1953, the United States has given Spain $350 million in arms; provided $895 million in various forms of economic aid (including $351 million in surplus commodities and $100 million in foodstuffs distributed through Catholic charities); and spent $400 million on the three huge air bases which will ultimately become the property of the Spanish state. Even more important, perhaps, the manner in which Americans live on their bases, and the vacations taken in Spain by increasing numbers of British, French, and Italian workers and lower-middle-class people, have furnished a powerful contrast to Spain's archaic social order.

But the positive values of U.S. aid are not recognized by the Spanish people, partly because the Franco regime never gives it any credit, partly because much of the aid has been siphoned off at the top, and partly because the American propaganda agencies defer to Franco. As a result, the Spanish people resent the presence of American soldiers on their soil, blame the inflation on American spending, and believe that America "keeps Franco in power."

Much of their criticism is quite unfair. Between 1945 and 1953, when the Spanish-American military alliance was signed, Spain was quite free to rid herself of Franco, but did not do so; instead, the Spanish people drew closer to Franco out of national pride and resentment of the United Nations blockade. But it is true that the U.S. government has gone beyond diplomatic politeness in dealing with Franco. The late Secretary of State Dulles personally visited the dictator on several occasions, and expressed warm feelings toward his regime. U.S. Ambassador John Davis Lodge has been even more explicit in his praise of Franco. At the same time, no member of the U.S. diplomatic-military-economic establishment in Spain has made the slightest contact with even the most moderate critics of the regime.

This seems to me as unfortunate as the similar refusal of the U.S. legation in Budapest to make contact, between 1952 and 1956, with the dissident Communist intellectuals grouped around Imre Nagy. For, sooner or later, peacefully or violently, the Franco regime will pass from the scene, and the West will have to deal with at least some of the men it now treats as pariahs. A failure to establish friendly relations with the Catholic, liberal, and socialist critics of Franco today, is, in a sense, the equivalent of the "non-intervention" policy the West pursued during the Spanish civil war; it will benefit chiefly the Communists.

When World War I broke out, Prince Kropotkin was asked by friends why he was sure that a Russian revolution would result. "Why," he replied, "because everybody expects one." Despite the contradictions which plague the Spanish opposition, the measure of the seriousness of the situation today is that, two decades after the civil war, there is again talk of revolution.

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HOMAGE TO BENNY LEONARD

A Story

MEYER LIBEN

"WHAT'S wrong with him?" asked Mr. Flaxman, as Davey got up from the table, where he had sat morosely through the meal, and walked off.

Mrs. Flaxman shrugged, as though to say that she could not choose amongst the numerous possibilities.

When, a moment later, Davey walked back into the dining room to pull out the ball which was securely lodged between the floor and the bottom of the bureau, his father asked him: "What is it, David?"

It was David's turn to shrug his shoulders. "Nothing, Pop."

"A fine nothing," said his father. "One could die looking at you."

"I'm telling you, Pop, it's nothing," and he walked slowly out of the house. When the door closed quietly behind him, did not slam, Mr. Flaxman said to his wife: "What is it, they don't tell you anything?"

There was an implied criticism here, the burden for the child's non-confiding was suddenly put on the mother.

"You were probably no different at that stage, that's how the children are."

Mr. Flaxman was momentarily bemused, as he thought of his far-off childhood, the childhood which is twice as far off for the immigrant as for the native-born.

"To tell you the truth," he said, "who remembers?"

Since the problem had not come into full light, he shook it off, the more so when his wife said: "I wonder what's bothering him. You think he's not feeling well? Maybe I'll take his temperature."

Mr. Flaxman shook the thing further away from him, shook it almost into non-being.

The sport pages of that morning's newspaper told the story of Davey's grief. It was the defeat of Benny Leonard, one of the three defeats this remarkable champion was ever to suffer in the ring.

Benny was the boy's hero. On the short side himself, putting his reliance on skill, speed, dexterity, what the kids called "form," it was only natural that Davey should identify this way with the peerless lightweight.

Stories he had heard at home of the Old World pogroms and persecutions had created an uncertainty, a fear, which required a defender. This defender was required against no present foe but against some unknown future enemy, even against the monstrous foes of the past—Haman, Antiochus Epiphanes, the thundering Black Hundreds.

It was no accident that at this time (later his heroes were the mighty figures Ruth and Dempsey) he needed the prince-hero, the 135-pounder who could weave, parry, outguess his opponent, jab, feint, dance off, and yet throw the sudden knockout punch, and then come dancing into the middle of the ring, his dark hair unruffled, saying into the microphone: "Hi Mom, he never even touched me."

At this moment Daniel Mendoza would not do, but Benny Leonard would.

He remembered his mother's story. She was taking care of the store in their Russian village. Suddenly the cry "Cossacks!" She quickly locked up the store, ran desperately. How Davey wished he could have been there to defend her. . . .

"Hi Davey."

MEYER LIBEN, a native New Yorker, has published a number of stories dealing with New York life in COMMENTARY as well as other magazines. "The Locking Gas-Cap" (December 1957) was his last previous contribution to our pages.

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It was Chick, also out in the street for that glorious hour between supper and sleep.

"What's eatin' you, Davey?"

When Davey mentioned the fight, Chick was surprised. He couldn't understand that much of a reaction.

"So what," said Chick, "you can't win them all."

Chick was one of those kids who had more easily thrown off his ghetto past. He did not seem to carry within him the ancient walled cities, the nighttime assaults and terrors; he did not dream the bearded Jew shot to death in the tunnels under the New York Central Railway up on Park Avenue. He took for granted the prevailing freedom, was not drawn to the ancient midnight, nor was he disturbed by vague and monstrous presentiments, menacing shadows. He was well-adjusted historically.

THIS rather flippant attitude on Chick's part both angered and relieved Davey, the anger because his friend did not share his woe, the relief because his friend kept him from sinking deeper and deeper into this woefulness.

It was not yet dark, just light enough to see a ball, so they had a catch, throwing the ball back and forth in a leisurely manner—slow balls, curves, floaters, and an occasional fireball down the groove. Allie and Richie joined them, and they got into a quick game of boxball, playing under the lamp post. Then it was too late to play, and they sauntered down the block, toward the candy store.

"Last one down is a rotten egg," said Chick, and the four of them were off in a flash. Allie, a P.S.A.L. runner, won easily, by four or five boxes. Richie, who was kind of heavy, pulled up a game last.

"You're the rotten egg," said Chick, but the satisfaction was not abiding.

Inside the candy store they picked and chose amongst the sponges, the caramels, the licorices, the creams, in the secure and exciting candy world.

Coming out, at their ease, chewing, or biting, or sucking, or crunching, they paused near a group of the Big Guys who were hanging around in front of the store. They stood close enough to the Big Guys to hear everything that was being said, but far enough away (they hoped) not to disturb them.

Included amongst these Big Guys was a lad who was not so much a stranger (for he was one of those nomadic types who thought it nothing to wander three or four blocks from his own block) as what you might call a border figure; he hung around enough so that he was no stranger, but still he did not belong, because he did not live on the block. There was always an element of suspicion attaching to one who did not live on the block. He was called "The Gate," or when he was addressed directly, "Gate." This nickname apparently referred to the figure he once had, wide and formidable. There were some signs of that old figure, out of which he had grown, and yet he kept the nickname (like a tall "Pee Wee" or a gray-haired "Red"). A later school of sociologists may decide that the nickname "Gate" refers to the blocking maneuver, founded on superstition, or suspicion, in a dice game.

Now the conversation of the Big Guys was not of a particularly profound sort. It related to given individuals, mixed praise with the most severe criticism, the foulest maledictions, and was punctuated by expectorations geared for aim or distance. But to Davey and his friends, age conferred, if not dignity, a certain awe, because of that extra measure of experience, the activities just beyond them, so they listened, hoping to get closer to the unknown, the forbidden, and to be initiated painlessly into the mystery of the stage ahead.

But this cynical adoration on the part of the youngsters (for it was not exactly improvement they were looking for) did not predispose *all* of the Big Guys in their favor. Some were pleased, some paid them no mind, but The Gate, who looked around and saw these blemishes on the landscape, said: "Whatta you kids hangin' roun' for?"

At this question the four of them, in a kind of reflex movement, seemed to come

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closer together, but nobody made a move, for it was clear that the taunter was not serious in his intentions.

The scattered interchange of praise and invective went on; two of the older fellows lit up cigarettes, but The Gate was not one of those two.

"Beat it, you shrimps," he said.

This statement was not yet the one requiring flight (though it was a move in that direction from the previous question) because it was a command, but without a threat attached.

None of the Big Guys showed much interest in The Gate's annoyance, they looked at it as a kind of eccentricity, but with a sure knowledge that there *was* a motive, inexplicable to be sure, but the kind of motive which could induce any one of them, under similar pressures, to behave quite the same way. One of them said, tolerantly:

"Aw, leave the kids alone, Gate."

But this friendly admonition only angered him the more, it was as though he was being opposed not only by the silent four, but by these contemporaries of his in whose company he was still somewhat of an outsider, where he still had to prove himself.

"Get goin'," said The Gate, "befaw I roon yiz."

Here was the command, and the threat, but no overt move. The Gate's rhetorical string was played out—his next move was pursuit. Again one of the Big Guys put a cautionary word to him, asking: "What's the diff if they stay here?" implying the acceptance and even enjoyment of the kids' somewhat idle homage.

"Because they're a buncha wise kids, that's what," said The Gate, and it was just then that Davey tossed up his ball, catching it in his backwards-cupped hand.

HERE, finally, was a reason, an act of insubordination to justify The Gate's wrath. He had been publicly humiliated.

"Aw right now," he said, and then he made his move. His intentions were obviously to disperse this group, swiftly, by this move in their direction, and then to return to the charmed circle, quietly triumphant.

To his surprise (and deepening chagrin), one of the four detached himself from the group, and advanced toward him, on his toes, in the approved boxing stance. The taunter was being taunted. In the few seconds between Davey's first move and his near approach, The Gate realized in what an absurd predicament he now found himself, forced to do battle with a kid three years younger and maybe thirty pounds lighter. To take on four of the kids was one thing; to find himself isolated with the one was monstrous. A victory could be only hollow and meaningless, a defeat catastrophic. He had no way of coming out at all. He looked longingly at Chick, Allie, and Richie, hoping they would move in to do battle, but they had stopped in their headlong flight, and were watching in fascination as their comrade-in-arms advanced on the enemy.

"Go way, ya runt," said The Gate to Davey, "go back tu da cradle."

In reply, Davey threw a left jab, which grazed The Gate's cheek.

Some of the Big Guys snickered. It was quite easy for them to turn against this suspect border figure.

The Gate had to protect himself, for to be hit by the kid was in itself an embarrassment, perhaps not so bad as sloughing him, but certainly shameful enough. The Gate's position was deteriorating fast, he could find help neither from his friends nor from his enemies.

Davey meanwhile was desperately trying to remember everything he had read about his hero's style. "Keep jabbin' him," he said to himself, "jab him crazy, look for the opening, and if you don't find it, move back. Then jab away again."

He followed his own instructions to the letter. The Gate had to adopt a fighting stance in order to avoid the ignominy of being hit. Davey was fighting against an immovable target, for if The Gate were to start moving forward that would constitute an offensive, and The Gate realized that after he was out of this absurd predicament he would have to be able to say: "The kid went

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crazy, I just kept blocking his punches."

But that turned out not to be the case, for every now and then one of Davey's blows landed, and each jab was a monstrous humiliation for the older boy.

Davey was in a kind of euphoria, imitating the image of himself, and every now and then realizing that it was all real, that he had fled the imaginary world where victory was dearly but surely won and was struggling here in the street, where the issue was always in doubt. Once more he jabbed at The Gate, struck him lightly under the eye, and danced off, but not before The Gate, helpless and infuriated, struck out blindly and hit Davey high up on the cheek.

The Gate advanced threateningly.

"Why doncha grow up?" he asked, but Davey's answer was a long left jab. One of the Big Guys snickered.

This ambiguous bout was brought to an end by a passer-by, one of those gents whose sense of justice is outraged by the sight of an obviously unequal struggle (as contrasted to one of those gents whose sense of exactly what? is outraged by the sight of an obviously equal struggle).

"Here, break it up, you two."

The Gate turned toward this gentleman with a look of the deepest gratitude. "You are a veritable Nestor," he seemed to be saying, "a depository of the most profound truths buried in the heart of mankind."

Davey was perhaps less pleased with the turn of events, and would have been even more less-pleased had his cheekbone not begun to swell and cause some discomfort.

"That'll loin ya," said The Gate, as Davey walked off with his friends, but this remark was meant for what record?

Davey was considerably cheered, he understood as well as the next one that the Big Guy had pulled his punches, but he was pleased with his own exhibition. Looking back, he saw himself in the classic weave, felt the acclaim of his invisible mentor.

"That was nice goin'," said Richie admiringly, and Davey felt also the approbation of the others. Then they walked each other home, and finally Davey and Chick stood together in the early darkness, they spoke seriously of matters of import, of the latest trade in the American League, of the next club meeting, of the distance of the furthest star.

"So long," said Chick, "see ya."

"So long," said Davey, and he sprinted to the door of his apartment, then opened the door slowly, hoping to avoid at least a direct appearance before his parents.

HE REACHED his room without being seen, and raised a warning finger to his lips at his brother Danny, as he opened and closed the door.

"Who socked you?" asked the younger brother.

"The Gate," said Davey, and he gave a blow-by-blow description.

Danny was proud, envious, and disbelieving.

"You don't have to believe me," said Davey, "just ask anyone tomorrow."

Then he got onto his bed and started on his homework. He wasn't at it long when his sister Joan, who was between the two boys in age, entered noiselessly.

"Did you see my *Little Women*?" she asked.

Davey denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of this work; Danny denied any knowledge of the very meaning of the question.

"It's a book," she said, "and I'm sure you know where it is."

The last part of the sentence was directed to Davey, who had been facing the wall, but now turned round to meet the gaze of his accuser.

She gasped with interest.

"What happened to you?" she asked.

"Oh, it's nothing," he said, "but don't tell Mom and Pop about it."

"If it's nothing," she asked, "why can't I tell them?"

"Instead of being so smart," he said, "why don't you think of something that will help?"

"Beefsteak," said Danny, who was steeped in all sorts of esoteric lore, "that will reduce the swelling."

"That's the same as steak," said Davey to

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his sister. "See if there's any in the kitchen."

She went and returned with a piece of steak in her hand.

"Great," said Davey, and he applied the meat to his cheek.

There was an instant of silence; then he opened his mouth with every intention of shrieking bloody murder, remembered the danger of disclosure, and bit into the meat, his eyes shut in agony.

"What's the matter?" gasped Joan.

"It burns," he said, "real bad."

They both looked at Danny, whose look of puzzlement suddenly passed into the area of understanding.

"Naturally," he said, "Mom salted the meat already."

"You're a girl," said Davey to Joan, "you should know all about these things."

"Don't bother me," said Joan, as she beat a retreat in the face of her brother's repeated admonitions to say absolutely nothing.

"They'll see it in the morning," said Danny sagaciously.

But Davey was not taking such a long view. He asked Danny to bring in some milk and crackers, and they ate and drank together.

Then it was Danny's bedtime, and Davey, to avoid discovery, and because he was tired, got into bed himself. Deep in his soul he exulted, having fought in the manner of his peerless champion, and for his vindication.

NEW HAMPSHIRE ECLOGUE

FRANCIS GOLFFING

I WATCHED rude farmers toiling east of Keene:
One farmer's engine coming on a corpse
Ground through the bones, moved on, and no harm done—
No harm but to the gossamer-thin wraith
Winding its way toward distant Golgotha.
The unredeemed are strewn across the world,
Clipped in this torment sleek as a machine,
Their brave skulls used for playing skittles now
By jaunty seminarians after dark.
But some men's minds cannot too well digest
The word made flesh still writhing on its rack,
The raw bog sucking down indifferently
Sheriff and murdered man and murderer:
But, green-eyed sorceress peering from each tree
To see your bronze bees storming round their hive,
I keep your image in my pupil fixed,
For yours, of all states, is the blessedest
Who driving all things draw them to yourself:
The great browned plane leaves flapping in a gale
That comes from nowhere, or all sides at once,
Acknowledge you as motive, and I stare
At your blind Pythian will that portions out
To the dim fire-fly apprehending space
Its magic scope; or in deep woods allows
Brief fabulous dominion to the frog
Or me to find enchanted in his tank
One tiny turtle worshipping the sun.

FRANCIS GOLFFING, poet and critic, teaches English at Bennington College. His review of Harold Rosenberg's *The Tradition of the New* appears elsewhere in this issue.

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THE JEWISH REVOLT AGAINST ROME

The War of 66-70 C.E.

CECIL ROTH

THE events in Palestine during the great revolt against the Romans in 66-73, culminating, although not ending, in the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in the year 70, constitute one of the most heroic chapters in Jewish history. It has nevertheless been unfortunate in its chroniclers. We are informed of these events in considerable detail by Josephus, who although writing for a Roman public was unable to conceal completely his admiration for the heroism of his fellow countrymen. But Josephus was a quisling, who had betrayed his people and deserted to the side of the conqueror, and was deeply concerned both to justify his own action and to adulate his patrons. He therefore was driven to denigrate his former Jewish associates, whom he depicts as ambitious cutthroats, fiercely quarreling among themselves for supremacy even when the enemy was at the gates. Other episodic accounts are to be found in the Roman historians, who saw in the Jewish patriots nothing more than fanatical tribesmen engaged in an unreasonable struggle against the majesty of Rome. And there is some interesting legendary embroidery in the Talmud, which adopted a distinctly pacifist attitude, finding its ideal not in those who carried on the struggle in the beleaguered city but in Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, who escaped to make his peace with the conqueror and secure the perpetuation of the Pharisaic academies. Finally, the Christian writers considered that the disaster of the year 70 was a natural punishment for the great crime committed by the Jewish people thirty-seven years earlier by the crucifixion of Jesus, and that those whom God wished to destroy He had previously made mad.

It was therefore inevitable that the lurid picture, of madness and ambition and violence and unreasonable faction fights in the face of the enemy, should have become accepted in modern historiography. One standard work by two eminent theologians goes so far as to discount even Tacitus's account of the oppression at the hands of the Roman procurators who goaded the people to rise in rebellion; it suggests that "the root cause [for the revolt] must be discovered partly in certain ingrained Jewish conceptions"—that is, apparently, a passion for independence and a profound belief in monotheism—and tells how a leader of the revolt found his way to Jerusalem with "a following of desperadoes," with whose support he henceforth kept the Holy City in a turmoil. A still popular children's history states how "The truer patriots counseled conciliation, and at the head of these was the good old High Priest" whose advice was so resented that "the poor old man . . . met with a violent death." One of the most competent one-volume Jewish histories describes how at the hour of crisis "three factions fought each other, divided by temperament, by personal animosities, by disputes over war methods." There is, however, no need to accumulate quotations. This is the point of view reflected more or less explicitly by almost all the historians of the period, which has become a commonplace even with Jews.

As I have said, this is largely due to the fact that the judgments of the renegade Josephus have been accepted blindly for various reasons by the general run of his-

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Long familiar to Commentary readers for his special historical investigations, Cecil Roth here offers a fresh analysis of the Jewish revolt of 66-70 C.E. Professor Roth's "A Solution to the Mystery of the Dead Sea Scrolls" appeared in our October 1957 number.

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torians. In Jewish history of the period, he played a role not dissimilar from that of Benedict Arnold, the renegade American general in the American War of Independence. How Josephus's literary work should be regarded can best be illustrated by a hypothetical quotation from a non-existent "History of the American Rebellion" as Arnold might have written it:

"In the winter of 1779 large numbers of these brigands gathered together in the hill country near Philadelphia, at a spot named Valley Forge. They were led by an ex-officer named Washington, who had been impelled by ambition to repudiate his oath of allegiance and place himself at the head of the rebels. From this favorable position they carried out raids on those peaceful farmers in the vicinity who remained loyal to the government. The brigands received much encouragement from the scribblings of a dissolute mechanic named Benjamin Franklin, now almost senile, who in consequence of having printed a number of almanacs for the lower classes considered himself a man of letters."

Imagine this spirit protracted over a long work, and you have Josephus's account of the War of 66-70. It is the historian's task to distinguish the true motives and attitudes behind the actions and personalities which we know only from Josephus's jaundiced pages.*

THE events in Jerusalem during these years (as a few scholars such as Joseph Salvador, Solomon Zeitlin, and Joseph Klausner realized) are to be considered in the context, not merely of a revolt against the Empire, but of a revolutionary movement which began with the popular rising against the Roman forces in the year 66—directed first against the occupying power, then against the ruling classes, then against the bourgeoisie as a whole. This sequence of events may be said to follow exactly the normal pattern of revolution, as defined by Crane Brinton in his remarkable work *The Anatomy of Revolution*. We may with Professor Brinton's guidance discern in the classical revolution some five successive stages:

1. It begins as a reformist movement, insisting on its loyalty to the regime but agitating for the removal of administrative abuses. The motive force at this stage is generally financial. There is inevitably some initial success—otherwise the revolution is stifled at the outset. Somewhat tardily, the government may try to become conciliatory, make concessions, and accept, however reluctantly, the revolutionary leaders.

2. The movement now becomes truly revolutionary in the political sense; the former government is repudiated and popular leaders assume control (e.g. the Girondins in France, Kerensky in Russia), adopting a mild program of social reform.

3. The social revolutionary stage now follows. The moderate leaders of the revolution are thrust aside, demagogic elements come to the fore, and an extreme social revolutionary program is started. The moderate revolutionaries who oppose this are suspected of conspiring with the supporters of the former legitimate authority and are stigmatized as counter-revolutionaries. This results in

4. The Reign of Terror, since at a period of such extreme danger it is dangerous to show compassion or to allow justice to take a leisurely course. The danger to the state —sometimes at this stage external—makes further desperate measures necessary, such as entrusting the government into the hands of a single person. Hence we arrive at

5. The dictatorship, exemplified in the towering figures of Oliver Cromwell in England and Napoleon Bonaparte in France. Thus, the face of the revolution is entirely changed. The wheel has gone full circle; and from certain points of view the actual

*The details in the following pages derive almost entirely from Josephus's *War of the Jews*, with some additional data from his *Autobiography*: I have used the Loeb Classics edition. In some instances the precise sequence of events is dubious, but the general picture is not affected by this. My use throughout of a "contemporary" vocabulary is deliberate, as it gives a far greater air of actuality to what otherwise seems improbable and remote. This is in the nature of a preliminary survey: I hope to return to the subject more systematically at some time in future.

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position is not dissimilar from that at the outset.

Now the history of the Jews in the heroic years 66-70 is to be interpreted properly in these same terms. It was a revolutionary movement as well as a patriotic movement: it followed precisely the standard pattern of revolution; it had as its sequel precisely the same political extremism, with precisely the same violent outcome; and it might have resulted in the end in the classical anti-revolutionary climax of revolutionary movements —perhaps indeed the tendency began to show itself—but for the intervention of the Roman forces and the capture of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

For of course, military action against the revolution may cut it short at any stage. A case in point is a revolutionary movement on a small scale which Professor Brinton did not take into consideration, but which is of particular interest to the present writer because it formed the subject of his first book, *The Last Florentine Republic, 1527-1530* (London, 1925). In this, the parallel to what took place fifteen hundred years before in Palestine is remarkably close. In both cases, the stage was small; a ruling house supported by alien authority was ejected after a long sequence of financial grievances; the revolution passed from the hands of the moderates to those of the extremists; it expressed itself in social as well as political terms; it was inspired throughout by a wild religious fervor and continued to hope against all hope for divine succor; violence against the counter-revolutionaries and their suspected sympathizers became the order of the day; there was a prolonged siege by alien forces and a heroic defense; and in the end the revolution was suppressed by force of enemy arms. The parallel with the Palestinian events of 66-70 is thus particularly close.

Crane Brinton points out the coincidence that the classical revolution generally has its origin in grievances against financial maladministration. Perhaps it is not a coincidence: Macchiavelli cynically observed that a man will forgive the butchery of his parents more readily than the loss of his fortune. However that may be, it is a fact that the English revolution began with the protest against Ship Money, the American Revolution with agitation against the Stamp Act, etc., the French Revolution with the incredible tangle of the royal finances and attempts to find a solution for the problem. Precisely similar was the case in Judea before the great outbreak in the year 66. The maladministration of the Roman procurators culminated in the heartless exactions of Gessius Florus, appointed in 64, who in the end even plundered the Temple treasury. This action was the immediate occasion for the protest meeting at which baskets were passed round by some practical jokers to receive gifts from the citizens for the benefit of the indigent governor. This developed into a riot which, though at first savagely suppressed, thereafter spread to such an extent that the Romans were driven out of the city.

Up to this stage the movement was on constitutional lines. The people declared themselves prepared to resume obedience to the Emperor, against whom they had no complaint, but refused to submit any longer to the hated procurator; and Herod Agrippa II, titular king, was able to exercise his influence on the side of moderation. Even now, therefore, agreement might have been possible, and the progress of the revolution arrested. But as our authority points out, the normal type of revolution begins with a striking initial success, which gives the insurgents encouragement (two outstanding instances are the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775 and the storming of the Bastille in 1789). The Jewish revolution of 66 begins with more resounding triumphs than either: first the destruction of the Roman cohort which had been holding out in the Jerusalem citadel, and later on the annihilation at Beth Horon of the punitive force which Cestius Gallus, Roman legate in Syria, led to Jerusalem in order to re-establish order. On the one hand, the brilliant victories gave the insurgents confidence; on the other, they

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had the inevitable result on the occupying power of such setbacks—the determination that order must be re-established before grievances could be taken into consideration, and that there could be no parley with rebels. The revolution was now irrevocably launched on its path.

The Zealots had emerged long before as a separate faction among the Jews—the "Fourth Philosophy," adhering on the whole to the Pharisaic point of view, except for one thing. The Pharisees had throughout their history a strong pacifist tendency, advocating loyalty to the alien government provided that there was no attempt to interfere with religious observance; the Zealots, on the other hand, laid down as their cardinal religious principle that the Jews had no other king but God alone, and that any show of allegiance to a non-Jewish authority was a fundamental breach of Jewish law and principles.

This tendency had first emerged in Galilee two or three generations before under the insurgent leader Hezekiah, who had been executed by Herod. It was further organized and given its theoretical basis by Hezekiah's son Judah, who proclaimed a state of perpetual warfare against the Romans and Roman sympathizers, and was killed when he led a revolt against the imposition of a poll tax by the Romans in 6-7 C.E. Two of his sons suffered the same fate in a rising some forty years later. At the time of the Revolution of 66, the Zealot faction was led by his surviving son, Menahem. Josephus speaks of him as a "sophist," from which one may assume perhaps that he had scholarly tendencies and further developed the theoretical basis of the movement. He certainly seems to have succeeded in imbuing his followers with a great degree of discipline and cohesion, and was to play for a short time a prominent part as a revolutionary leader. He and his followers could indeed have boasted that they were under arms in the *maquis* while the elements who later seized control were still attending receptions in the Roman procurator's palace.

The activist wing of the Zealot party Josephus terms the *sicarii* or dagger-men: one may compare the "gunmen" of the period of the struggle for Irish independence, or the "terrorists" in most contemporary revolutionary movements, who if the revolution succeeds become immortalized as revolutionary martyrs. It is indeed curious how faithful the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary vocabulary remains throughout the ages. The Germans in France in our own days, like Josephus in Palestine twenty centuries before, tried to discredit the resistance movement by terming its adherents "brigands." The activists are of course no less embittered against the temporizing element among their compatriots than they are against the alien oppressors themselves. It is only to be expected then that Josephus should indignantly describe the manner in which the assassins extended their activities among the "loyal" population under the very noses of the Roman authorities, so that in the end even a High Priest was among their victims. The Rabbinic literature seems to reflect the same attitude against "collaborationists" when it tells us that death at the hands of the Zealots (*kannaim*) was the penalty for sexual relations with an "Aramean."

It appears from Josephus's story that the *sicarii* had a social and economic as well as a political program. This emerges from what happened at the beginning of the revolt against Rome, when the political malcontents who were holding the Temple were reinforced by a body of *sicarii* with whose help they assaulted the Upper City, which we might term the fashionable and business quarter. Here they destroyed the palaces of the members of the upper class who opposed them, including King Agrippa, who was trying to persuade them to yield, and the pro-Roman ex-High Priest Hanan (Ananus). They also set fire to the public archives—their object, according to Josephus, being "to destroy the moneylenders' bonds and prevent the recovery of debts," so as to enlist the sympathy of the mob. Hard-pressed at the outset, they received decisive

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aid with the arrival in Jerusalem of Menahem and his followers, who (operating perhaps from Qumran*) had stormed the Herodian fortress-palace at Masada overhanging the Dead Sea and equipped themselves from the great armory that had been established there. Flushed with triumph, and exceptionally well equipped, they now were responsible for the capture of the fortress of Antonia and the royal palace, notwithstanding the desperate defense put up by the Roman garrison.

After the successful action against the Roman forces in Jerusalem, Menahem tried to follow up his triumph by establishing his personal supremacy. Josephus does not make much of this; but he himself sought refuge in the Temple among his fellow priests, so that it seems that the situation was critical for a time: other persons belonging to the same element whose loyalty was suspect, including a former High Priest, were hounded down and assassinated. In the ensuing fighting, however, Menahem was worsted and killed by the "moderate" elements, led by the captain of the Temple. His surviving followers now withdrew from the city back to the Dead Sea area, under the leadership of his nephew and successor Eleazar ben Jair (probably, as it seems to the present writer, the "Teacher of Righteousness" of the Dead Sea sect).

A PRIESTLY junta (or perhaps it is more correct to say, Temple-and-bourgeois coalition) now assumed control. Shocked by their recent glimpse at the realities of revolution in its wider sense, they were already, it seems, beginning to regret their action against the Romans and to think in terms of compromise. According to Josephus, "we [i.e. himself, the chief priests, and ruling Pharisees] were in a state of great alarm. We saw the populace in arms, and were at a loss what to do. . . . We professed therefore to concur in their views, but suggested that they should make no move and leave the enemy alone if he advanced. . . . In doing so we had hopes that before long Cestius would come up with a large army and quell the Revolution." This is no doubt an *ex post facto* account, partly intended to put the historian right in the eyes of the Romans, who remembered him as one of the insurgent generals. But we may at least deduce that already at this early stage there were searchings of the heart among some of those who had been prominent in the initial move against Roman maladministration. They had thought only in terms of removing abuses and, at the most, throwing off the alien yoke. To their consternation, they found that they had helped to stir up a movement which would threaten their own position and their own fortunes. From the point of view of this element, the overthrow of Cestius Gallus in the brilliant series of actions during his retreat from Jerusalem was not a triumph but a foreboding of misfortune.

Inevitably, at this stage the revolution was a "bourgeois" one. The void in government was filled by reverting to the "traditional" constitution of the country, before the usurpation of the Hasmonean monarchs. From the period of the Return from Exile, or at all events from a little while after that date, the internal affairs of the country, under its successive Persian and Greek and Egyptian and Syrian overlords, had been controlled by the High Priest. This therefore was assumed to be the "natural" constitution of the Jewish people. When military governors for the various key positions were appointed by a "popular" assembly meeting in the Temple court, half of them were priests. The ex-High Priest Hanan (Ananus) was given supreme control over the defenses of Jerusalem, in association with one Joseph ben Gorion, and in effect became head of the provisional government. Eleazar ben Hananiah, captain of the Temple, who had originally instigated the repudiation of allegiance to Rome, was sent to the frontier command in Idumea,

*In the opinion of the present writer, the "Qumran Sect," whose doctrines and organization are reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls, were in fact Zealots. See "A Solution to the Mystery of the Scrolls," COMMENTARY, October 1957.

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while Joseph ben Mattathias the priest (better known as Josephus), notwithstanding his youth and inexperience, became military commander in Galilee. It is not very much of an exaggeration to say that the country was mainly governed by a priestly junta, belonging moreover on the whole to aristocratic families traditionally associated with the high priesthood. Considerable influence in Jerusalem was exercised also by the Pharisee leader Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel, grandson of the great Hillel—once again, a member of an aristocratic or at least upper-middle-class family. He, together with Hanan and Joseph ben Gorion, an able soldier, formed a triumvirate in whose hands supreme authority was generally believed to reside. Another member of the revolutionary government was Antipas, of the Herodian house, and close relative of King Agrippa, who had been one of the delegation which had been sent by the insurgents to interview Florus. He now became state treasurer (in Josephus's words, he "carried such weight in the city that he was entrusted with the charge of the public treasury").

After the suppression of the Zealot *coup de main* in the autumn of 66, this provisional government under the ex-High Priest Hanan, representing a coalition between the priestly and the bourgeois elements, seems to have ruled with a heavy hand. There is evidence that they tried to suppress by military action the democratic elements which opposed their rule. Extremists such as Simon bar Giora and Eleazar ben Simon, notwithstanding the fact that they had played outstanding parts in the victory against Cestius, were excluded from office. When the former established himself in the hill country of Acrabatene, a military expedition was sent to eject him; there is evidence of violent action against the *sicarii* of Masada and Qumran; and the Jerusalem Zealots under Eleazar ben Simon were hemmed up in the Temple area. (Josephus naturally ascribes all the responsibility for the collision to the latter, but his evidence is not necessarily to be accepted literally.) All this is possibly to be taken in conjunction with Josephus's own policies in Galilee, in which even before he showed his pro-Roman sympathies he violently collided with what he depicts as the subversive elements in the population.

THERE is no need to go here into any details of the campaign in Galilee which he directed anemically against Vespasian's forces, or of its final debacle, when he shamelessly went over to the enemy. From the point of view of the revolution in Jerusalem, this had results precisely opposite to what might have been anticipated. The priestly junta was apparently prepared, like Josephus (who may indeed have been acting in outright collusion with them), to come to terms. However, the influx of war refugees from Galilee under John of Gischala, bringing with them details of the shameful betrayal perpetrated by the priestly nominee there, reinforced the extremist elements and swung the scale decisively against the moderates. Where the Galileans stood in the revolutionary pattern is not easy to determine. However, Josephus sneeringly refers to the activities in the oil trade of their leader, John of Gischala, and we may consider him as belonging to the petty bourgeoisie, standing midway between the priestly junta and their associates on the one side and the Jerusalem proletariat on the other. Associating himself at first with the former (presumably with a "Unified Front" or "Win the War" program), he ultimately began to realize or suspect their anti-national objectives and swung over to the Zealots, entrenched under Eleazar ben Simon on the Temple mount. The other side controlled all the disciplined soldiery and were supported by the forces of law and order, and their position thus seemed to be almost impregnable. However, on John of Gischala's secret advice the Zealots sent for help to the Idumeans (Edomites) who, although but recently converted to Judaism, were now hyper-nationalist. It was not difficult therefore to arouse them on the plea that the priestly junta was preparing to betray the city and the revolution to the Romans. They marched to Jerusalem, entered the gates

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during a violent thunderstorm, and swung the balance decisively on the side of the "democratic" elements.

THE Revolution now entered a second and more extreme, "Jacobin," phase, accompanied by the outbreak of violence characteristic of this stage—directed in part, as usual, against the original revolutionary leaders. Already in the disorders which preceded the Zealot triumph a series of arrests and executions had been carried out in the capital by a band of extremists led by one John ben Dorcas, who sometimes broke into the prisons and summarily put to death persons awaiting trial. (This provides a close parallel to the September Massacres in Paris in 1792, and had the same justification—that, with the menacing advance of the enemy, the revolution was in danger.) The victims included various members of the former royal house, one being the Antipas who had been appointed state treasurer after the revolution. After the overthrow of Hanan and the triumvirate, what may be termed a Committee of Public Safety was set up to "save the revolution." So far as possible judicial forms were observed at first. A special popular tribunal of seventy—not merely the twenty-three necessary for capital offenses according to Pharisaic rulings—was convened to try cases of treason. The first person brought before it was Zachariah ben Banias, charged with conspiring to betray the city to the Romans, but suspect also because of his great wealth. He put up a spirited defense, and was acquitted. But, in such times, necessity is held to override the letter of the law. He was accordingly hurried away and summarily put to death, the emergency tribunal being dissolved. Henceforth, the revolutionary leaders would take no chances, and not only Hanan, who for so long had been at the head of the provisional government, but also persons such as Niger the Perean and Gorion ben Joseph (*i.e.*, Joseph ben Gorion?), who had played a prominent part in earlier stages of the revolt and served in important military commands, were executed without trial. (R. Simon ben Gamaliel, the Pharisaic leader, also disappears from view at this point.) The phenomenon of distinguished generals who had once faithfully served the revolution ultimately adhering to the enemy is not indeed unknown in other ages, as witness for instance the French example of Dumouriez. Incidentally, there is some evidence that at this point Josephus grossly exaggerated the scope of the Reign of Terror. Though his own parents were arrested their lives were spared, and his mother was apparently allowed to have her personal attendants with her in prison—even though he himself had already joined the Romans and was serving in their forces in the capacity of what we would term today "director of psychological warfare."

There is little direct evidence regarding the social program of the Jerusalem extremists as distinct from the more advanced *sicarii*, heirs to the teachings of Menahem ben Judah, who controlled the Dead Sea area. The former were ardently patriotic, and democratic in tendency. In internal politics they seem to have reacted violently against the aristocratic and oligarchic tendencies which had dominated the revolution at the outset, and as a natural corollary, they opposed the closed ring of interconnected families who had formerly controlled the high priesthood. In the French Revolution, we perhaps find the parallel to the differences between them and the *sicarii*. The Girondins, though republicans and idealists, were champions of the rights of property, whereas the Mountain, which depended for its power on the organized mob of Paris, tended more and more in the direction of what is now called socialism. On the other hand, John of Gischala, though often spoken of by modern historians as a Zealot, and though over a long period he acted in collaboration with them, did not in fact belong to this faction. As we have seen, he belonged to the merchant class, with different social and economic standards. Moreover, he seems from Josephus's account to have been, unlike the Zealots, somewhat careless in his standards of religious observance.

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An obviously revolutionary step taken by the Zealots at this time was to remove the high priesthood, the most important office in the state, out of the hands of the closed circle of aristocratic families who had long monopolized it. Josephus tells us how this was done. Hitherto, the incumbent of the supreme office had usually been chosen from among themselves by the representatives of these families, their candidate being subsequently presented for approval to the ruling house or the occupying power. But there was another possible method which was much followed in antiquity. Aristotle had said that the appointment to office by election is oligarchic, but by lot (which gave every man an equal chance) democratic: and this was the point of view too in city-states of medieval and Renaissance Italy. This, then, was the system which was now adopted. Josephus tells us contemptuously (and the story is confirmed in the Talmudic account) how the popular elements insisted on selecting a new High Priest by lot, a simple descendant of Aaron named Phanni ben Samuel being in consequence dragged from the plough to serve at the altar. A man of the people now occupied the highest office in the state.

John of Gischala's assumption of the leadership of the patriotic extremists perhaps implied a slowing down of the revolutionary program in favor of a more vigorous military policy. For the extreme elements—the "pure" Zealots—such steps were a superfluous and needless labor, so long as the implications of the revolution itself, in the social and religious sphere, had not been realized. They now became reorganized under their old leader, Eleazar ben Simon, who had seized the Roman treasure chest at the outbreak of the revolution but had been excluded from the provisional government, as we have seen. He now "seceded from the party," together with certain other leaders who shared his ideas, and seized the inner court of the Temple: that is, the actual sanctuary and place of sacrifice, where for some time henceforth they were in sole control. (It is to be presumed that the democratic High Priest recently appointed threw in his lot with them.) The few glimpses of Eleazar ben Simon's character that are afforded in our sources seem to suggest that he may be regarded perhaps as the idealist of the revolutionary period. His conceptions centered in the Temple and the maintenance of public worship, which he considered so important that he apparently allowed free access to the altar even to his enemies.

All this contrasts strikingly with the purely political motivation (as it appears) of the more secular John of Gischala, a very different person. It may be that the pure Zealots objected to the latter's dictatorial tendencies. As the surviving member of the quadrumvirate which had been in control in Jerusalem after the Roman conquest of Galilee, he may have considered himself to be the legitimate ruler, but the tendency to suspend constitutional guarantees and to concentrate power in the hands of a single person is a commonplace in such situations. Josephus hints darkly at homosexual practices among his followers—another lurid accusation which we often hear in similar circumstances.

Later on, John of Gischala with his strong personality and his political adroitness and fine resistance record, as well as his devoted following, was able to reassert his authority over his Zealot rivals: Josephus possibly exaggerates the degree of violence by which this was achieved, as the two factions now drew together again, Eleazar ben Simon and his followers fighting henceforth to the end under John's command.

MEANWHILE another revolutionary party had appeared in the city, led by Simon bar Giora, who at the outbreak of the revolt had taken a distinguished part in the fighting and later made himself master of the district of Acrabatene. Obviously he belonged to the extreme left wing of social revolutionaries. "Bar Giora" means "son of the proselyte": he thus had no connections with the country's upper or middle class, belonging to the flotsam and jetsam of the population who are initially thrown up in

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a revolution. Josephus gives us an inkling of his social program, which horrified him. A democrat in the fullest measure, and in a sense that was true of none of the other leaders of the revolution, he believed in real equality for all, without exception: for we are informed how he proclaimed liberty for the slaves, who flocked to his standard. It is very probable that he based this on religious grounds, claiming that it was a fulfillment of the word of God before whom all men were equal, the realization and implementation of this being a prerequisite of redemption: indeed, did not the prophet Isaiah tell how the true redeemer of Israel would bind up the broken-hearted and proclaim liberty to the captives, before the great day of triumph? One may understand now why it was that at the beginning of the revolution the ex-High Priest Hanan had sent a military expedition to eject him from Acrabatene. He thereupon took refuge with the *sicarii* in Masada; the fact that he was admitted there, for however short a time, suggests that at least some of his political and economic program was not wholly unacceptable in this apocalyptic environment. It is to be noted, however, that he is never described in any contemporary source as a Zealot.

After a while, Simon bar Giora and his hosts fell out. Profiting from the difficulties of the central government in Jerusalem after the fall of the priestly junta, he now began to establish his authority in the outlying areas, including Idumea, receiving a great degree of popular support for his economic, social, and political policies. The Zealots entrenched in Jerusalem, however, opposed him and his programs resolutely, not to say frenziedly. Meanwhile, the remnant of the moderate party in the capital, headed by the recently deposed High Priest Mattathias ben Boethus, were looking round desperately for some ally. They found no possibility—incongruous though this was—except in Simon bar Giora and his followers, who at all events were opposed to the Zealots, and who they hoped would be sobered by responsibility. Nothing loath, Simon and his new levies, recruited from released ex-prisoners who had streamed to join his standard, now marched on the Holy City, freeing the slaves, opening the prisons, and gathering fresh force as they progressed. Obviously, they wished to carry the revolution yet a stage further. By the time he reached the city walls, Bar Giora had 15,000 men behind him.

In the spring of 69, thanks to the military assistance of some of the Idumean forces who had remained behind after the return of their compatriots to their own country, Simon entered the gates and before long was able to make himself master of the entire walled area—both the Upper City and the Lower City—with the exception of the Temple Mount where John of Gischala and the Zealots remained in control. Simon was, however, master of the Holy City as a whole, and of the great majority of the much swollen population as well as of the armed forces, and is henceforth to be reckoned as head of the attenuated Jewish state: it was indeed as such that he was put to death by the Romans in their sadistic fashion when Vespasian celebrated his triumph. His administration of the beleaguered city seems to have been efficient though—necessarily—firm and unyielding. But it was inevitably a one-man rule: indeed, there is some evidence that he was formally appointed, or accepted, by the people as the head of the state. (If that is so, we have here the normal paradoxical climax of the pattern of revolution as it so frequently evolves.)

At this stage, according to the historians, there was carried on the fratricidal warfare within the walls, in the face of the Roman menace, which sealed the doom of the beleaguered city. A moment's consideration shows that this was inevitable and, granted the premises, even proper. For the various factions were struggling, not merely to defend the city against the Romans, but to establish the reign of God on earth. Once they had done this, God would Himself descend on the city and save them. Until they had done so, none of their efforts could

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be successful. It did not matter how extreme their case was—the Divine power would be sufficient. But the Divine power would not manifest itself until all iniquity had been purged away and justice and righteousness fully established in the Holy City among the remnant of the Holy People. The fact that the Romans were beneath the walls and the city in mortal danger proved that this had not yet taken place. It was therefore utterly necessary to sweep away the men of iniquity and their regime. They did not fight among themselves despite the fact that the condition of the city was so extreme; it was precisely because the condition was so extreme that it was necessary for the advanced religious wing of the social revolutionaries to fight against those who were obstructing their program. Only if the Law was observed fully and social justice was implemented according to the prophetic vision would the Lord descend on the ramparts to save His once chosen people: if the slaves were set free, the Biblical laws protecting the poor and needy put into force, interest no longer exacted on loans to the man who needed help, and every man dealt justly with his neighbor. We have no direct evidence; if anything was written down, it must have been destroyed with the city itself when the Roman legionaries at last breached the walls. But this plea for social justice, or if you please this program of social reform, more or less extreme in accordance with the tendencies (one might almost say, the party affiliations) of the "prophet," must have constituted a great part of those ratiocinations to which Josephus superciliously alludes.

This obviously explains one of the episodes relating to this period, hardly credible in itself, but recounted with some differences by Josephus, Tacitus, and even in the Talmudic sources, so that there can be no doubt about it: how, after the city was completely beleaguered, the granaries were deliberately burned, the food supplies which might have rendered possible a more protracted resistance being thus consumed. The defenders of the city were profoundly convinced that if they trusted implicitly in God, He would save them even at the last moment. Firing the granaries not only demonstrated their trust, but also brought nearer the last moment, when God would assuredly manifest Himself. For Simon bar Giora and his followers to refuse to come to terms with their rivals, for them to attempt to insure their dominance in the city by a *coup de main,* was similarly not paradoxical; nor from their point of view was it suicidal; nor could it weaken the defense. On the contrary, it was only thus, by insuring the favor and good will of God, that victory could be possible. Meanwhile, in and around the Dead Sea, the Zealot extremists still maintained themselves aloof, biding their time—cherishing the memory of that Menahem ben Judah who had been assassinated in Jerusalem by the priestly junta at the outbreak of the revolution, and convinced it was themselves and their doctrines that God would establish firmly in the "end of days," when their rivals had been swept away in the maelstrom of war.

In the end, it was the Roman military machine that triumphed; Jerusalem was captured, to be followed three years later by Masada. The Jewish revolutionary leaders either perished sword in hand, disappeared into obscurity, or were subjected to the ruthless judgment of the Roman conqueror. The Temple lay in ruins, the once dominant priestly element thus losing its *raison d'être.* The Pharisaic leaders, personified in Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, who had been smuggled out of the city by his pupils during the siege, were quick to realize their opportunity, and established themselves as the supreme Jewish authority. The revolution had collapsed. More than that: its memory disappeared.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

AN APPRECIATION OF I. L. PERETZ

S. NIGER

SAMUEL CHARNEY, who died in New York in 1955, was known to Jewish readers as S. NIGER and regarded as the dean of Yiddish literature. A review of the *S. Niger Memorial Volume* elsewhere in the present issue points out that Niger's career spanned the growth of modern Yiddish literature itself, and his accomplishments on behalf of that literature were unrivaled. Among his many books are *Sholem Aleichem* (1928), *Mendele Mocher Seforim* (1936), *H. Leivick* (1948), and *I. L. Peretz* (1952).

Niger managed, in the hectic atmosphere of Yiddish literature during its most vital period, to achieve a position above factions. His special qualities—sanity, breadth, non-partisanship—distinguish the following essay on Peretz which appeared (unabridged) in the *American Jewish Year Book*, 1953 (Vol. 54) at the centenary of Peretz's birth.—ED.

MAY 18, 1952, marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Yitzchak Leybush Peretz—poet, storyteller, dramatist, essayist, journalist, editor.

Peretz's work became familiar to readers of Hebrew as early as the 70's and 80's of the 19th century; in 1888 he began to publish in Yiddish and rapidly assumed a position of leadership in Yiddish literature as an inspiring force. However, Peretz never identified wholly either with the Hebraists or with the Yiddishists; he had written in Yiddish before 1888, and he continued to employ Hebrew to achieve certain of his literary goals after that date. For Peretz had too many intellectual interests, was too many-sided a man, too dynamic an artist and thinker, and, regardless of his social democratic sympathies, was too much of an individualist ever to be a social or literary partisan.

Hence it is not surprising that almost every group and faction in Jewish life and literature should claim some aspect of Peretz as its own. The hundredth anniversary of his birth [was] celebrated by Yiddishists and Hebraists, Zionists and non-Zionists, Socialists and non-Socialists alike. . . . Peretz's diversity was not limited to literary forms and language. He made a deep impression both on the literature of the Jewish Enlightenment (particularly on the popular and Socialist-oriented aspects) and on the literature of the post-Enlightenment period. He was limited to no particular epoch or ideology. Peretz's career is the history of modern East European Jewish thought and writing in brief.

Three factors contributed to the variety of Peretz's genius: the milieu where he spent the first and largest part of his life; his family; and his unique personality.

Born in Zamosc, a former Russian stronghold near the Austrian and German frontiers, Peretz imbibed these various cultures in his youth, in addition to the Jewish, and they all had a part in the shaping of his remarkably broad *Weltanschauung*.

Other forces conspired to free Peretz from the narrow confines of his birthplace, which despite the appellation of Paris Minor in which its residents delighted, was after all only a provincial Russian-Polish town. Peretz came of a solid Sephardic-Ashkenazic family of distinguished lineage, intellectually sophisticated and rich with the traditional religious culture. Then again, the Jewish community of Zamosc had lost its homogeneous charac-

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ter as early as the first half of the 19th century. In Peretz's youth the community was differentiated—not like other Jewish provincial towns only into the Hasidim and their opponents, the Mitnagdim—but also along the lines of the Orthodox, the semi-Orthodox, and the more-or-less enlightened group that included Jewish merchants whose business took them abroad to such cosmopolitan centers as Danzig and Leipzig. Peretz's early profession was also significant. He was a lawyer, an occupation that enriched his social experience and cultural interests. Yet none of these hereditary and environmental influences would have been efficacious had Peretz not been singularly equipped by his own personal qualities to assimilate them. . . .

Peretz's earliest poetry, written in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish when he was very young, shows a confluence of three cultural streams that could not have been accidental: that of Jewish folklore, that of the Enlightenment, and that of the humanistic "positivist" European literature of the 19th century. Even in his juvenilia certain basic characteristics and motifs typical of his later work are evident: a frequently epigrammatic style; humor blended with satire; the "romantic irony" of Heine, simultaneously sentimental and sarcastic; a narrative tendency in his verse, and a fondness for the form and didactic character of the parable; a concern with social problems and radical interpretations of society; and an interest in love as a psychological motif, an innovation in Yiddish literature in the 70's and 80's of the 19th century.

In the late 1880's, when Peretz had begun to publish stories in addition to his earlier poetry in both Yiddish and Hebrew, an important change took place in his personal life, as well. He was compelled to quit Zamosc (he had been informed on for propagating Socialist ideas, and the Tsarist regime had deprived him of the right to practice law). For a year Peretz travelled through the Polish provinces as a member of a commission that was investigating the economic situation of the provincial Polish Jews. (The literary result of this trip was a series of excellent sketches of Jewish life in the small towns of Poland.) Afterward Peretz moved his permanent residence to Warsaw, where he took a position in the Jewish community administration. For half his work-day he labored in the Department of Cemeteries; the other half he devoted to his vigorous social and literary activities. He was not content to write poetry, stories, popular science, essays, and later plays—Peretz was also an editor, publisher, did public reading, lectured, was a communal figure, and became a youth leader, particularly interested in those young people who had literary, artistic, or theatrical ambition and talent.

In 1891 Peretz began to publish almanacs devoted to literature and social problems, which were known as the *Yiddishe Bibliotek*. He was assisted in this work by Jacob Dineson, a popular novelist who devoted almost all of his free time to Peretz, to the point where he practically stopped writing himself to become Peretz's alter ego. The *Bibliotek* was financed by a group of Jewish intellectuals interested in the enlightenment of the Polish Jewish masses. Peretz eagerly discovered and developed talented co-workers.

A few years later (1894-96) Peretz became associated with the students and young workers. With the collaboration of David Pinsky, who shortly afterward emigrated to the United States, Peretz began to publish brief almanacs, in lieu of a periodical, which it was extremely difficult to obtain governmental permission to publish. These *Yomtov Bletlach*, as they were popularly known, appeared on every Jewish holiday and special occasion, and contained, in addition to Peretz's own works, that of other young and liberal Jewish writers. Though never explicitly revolutionary because of the difficulties of censorship, the *Yomtov Bletlach* became a kind of legal organ for the illegal workers' and youth movement, which was then beginning to be organized. Peretz became the hero of these restless groups, though he himself belonged to none of their organizations, and they were influential in popularizing his publications. Peretz frequently attended their underground meetings to give them readings from his works (in 1899 he was arrested at one of these meetings and imprisoned for three months).

Peretz set his personal imprint on the nascent Jewish literature and the movement whose aim it was to instruct the average Jew and to raise his cultural level. He was not

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the leader of that movement, because leadership demands a more circumscribed and set credo than the one Peretz possessed. Not being the standard bearer of the Jewish cultural movement, Peretz became its standard. Ceglana No. 1, the modest three-room apartment in Warsaw which he occupied until several years before his death, became the address of Jewish literature. Such literary aspirants as Abraham Reisen, Yehoash (Solomon Bloomgarten), David Pinsky, and later Sholem Asch and H. D. Naumberg came to Warsaw from the provinces, carrying manuscripts in their pockets, especially to see Peretz. Composers, actors, painters, sculptors from every part of Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, young artists and intellectuals —all came to Ceglana No. 1, to read their works aloud and listen to the works of others, to discuss literary and social problems, to sing folk songs and sit at Peretz's table of a Sabbath eve, like Hasidim at the table of their rebbe.

Peretz's influence was not restricted to Europe. From 1893 on, almost all his writings were reprinted in American Yiddish journals and periodicals. Some of his satirical works could only be published pseudonymously in the United States because of the strict Russian censorship. . . .

It was Peretz's contention that a writer must use the vernacular as he would any other language—as Peretz himself did. Even more strongly than Mendele Mocher Seforim, Peretz was opposed . . . to cheap popularization, to belaboring the obvious. An author, he felt, was under an obligation to place his whole intellectual and artistic ego at the disposal of the reader, even the common reader, and dared not offer only fragments of his personality. . . .

Inevitably, Peretz had to modify the Yiddish language to achieve his purposes. . . . Peretz surpassed his contemporaries in the freedom and audacity with which he coined phrases and introduced foreignisms.

As well as enriching Yiddish diction, Peretz accelerated its rhythm. Sholem Aleichem's tempo, like Mendele's, is that of the *shtetl,* the provincial small-town—slow, stable, set. Peretz made Yiddish more dynamic, more urbane. His sentences are short, breathless, rapid, nervous. Like his two colleagues Peretz took the themes of the bulk of his work from the *shtetl* environment of his youth; but his technique is cosmopolitan, almost European.

There is a similar distinction between Sholem Aleichem and Mendele on the one hand and Peretz in their attitude toward folklore. All three writers introduced a tremendous amount of folklore into their works; but while Mendele and Sholom Aleichem took no pains to separate themselves from their subject matter, either in style or in language, the distance between folklore and literature is . . . in Peretz . . . readily seen.

Concomitant with the flexibility and urban mobility of his diction and style, the restless thrust of his ideas, and the vigor of his emotions was the principle, the very atmosphere, of individualism that Peretz introduced into Yiddish literature. Previous to Peretz, Yiddish literature had been essentially communal. Its background had been Kobtsansk, Kasrilevke—the Jewish community *qua* community. Every character represented not only himself but also the group and collective of which he was a part—the poor people or the rich people, the old-fashioned traditionalists or the up-to-date enlightened folk. Peretz did not disassociate himself from the community; he continued the tradition of depicting the social and communal milieu. But his writings give expression to the individual *qua* individual.

The uniqueness of Peretz's accomplishment in Yiddish literature lay in the fact that he was the first to give Yiddish narrative a universal psychological dimension. Peretz's characters are all completely Jewish. But since it was his aim to penetrate to the core of their personalities—and at heart they are primarily human—it may be said that while Sholem Aleichem and Mendele looked primarily for the Jew in the human being, Peretz discovered the human being in the Jew. He presents universal human problems for our consideration in an authentic Jewish form. . . .

At bottom Peretz was never completely a revolutionary realist or a romantic nationalist. His early "realism" was one of depth, often employing folk material and allegorical in spirit. Despite the fact that his Hasidic and folk tales were based on historical, folk, and legendary sources, his "romantic" work never showed the slightest desire to revive the past. Nor was his

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romanticism ever that idealism of the Middle Ages so characteristic of the German Romantic movement of the early 19th century. In Peretz's romanticism he attempted to forecast the future in the depths of the past; he was a revolutionary romantic à la Victor Hugo, rather than a romantic à la Chateaubriand. . . .

THERE is a saying in one of Peretz's stories which bears directly on him. In "Skoler Rebbetzin" (from the book *Provintzreise*) the widow of the rabbi of Skol repeats this saying in the name of her husband, who had been a Mitnagid, an opponent of the Hasidim. "When people came to him and complained about the Hasidim, he said: 'There are many kinds of armies, there are many kinds of weapons, there are various customs in the world, but we are all serving the same kindom . . . the *one* kingdom.'"

The kingdom that Peretz served with a variety of weapons was that of humanism, broadly and profoundly comprehended. He did not hesitate to humanize the very mysticism of Hasidism (as, for example, in his "Oyb Nish Noch Hecher"). He believed, as a poet, in the identity of beauty and truth —and truth, in Yiddish as in a few other languages, is a synonym for charity and justice. The common man occupied so large a role in Peretz's works not only because he represented the downtrodden elements of society that Peretz aimed to ameliorate. But, like the sick boy in his story of that title, Peretz also longed for Jewish life to tower toward heaven, like a medieval cathedral. . . .

Typically, Peretz's principal metaphor for dimension was that of unlimited height. Mendele Mocher Seforim helped Yiddish literature take root and draw its sustenance from the deep soil of Jewish life; with Sholom Aleichem the language and literature expanded (although in a work like *Tevye der Milchiger* the dimension of depth is involved again); and Peretz endowed Yiddish with lofty scope.

Peretz reached the peak of his own artistry in the more successful of his Hasidic folk tales. In the course of exalting the heroes of the Hasidic folktales he elevated himself as well. His neo-Hasidism did not consist in his becoming "Hasidized"; it would be more accurate to state that he "Peretzized" Hasidism, as he did the Yiddish folk tales. The Hasid's faith, his pious fervor, the holiness of his rebbe, his ecstatic singing and dancing—Peretz translated these into the universal language of man's faith in his creative potentialities, the ecstasy of human heroism, and the joy of dreaming. . . .

Thomas Mann has observed that there is a natural human tendency to enjoy looking for and discovering contradictions in the life and work of every great writer. This is certainly true of Peretz, as well. Complementing his romantic fantasy, Peretz was the first to introduce intellectuality of a certain kind into Yiddish literature. Though he formulated no specific ethical credo, Peretz resembled the old Yiddish morality writers. His art was often essentially one of ideas, perhaps because his personality was more ethical than aesthetic. Perhaps that is why he so seldom depicted nature; his true *paysage* was human nature, ambivalent and contradictory in the same sense that Peretz himself was in his relation to the world in general and Jewish life in particular—although he did not view himself as either ambivalent or contradictory. . . .

Spiritually the most youthful of Jewish writers, he longed for "age" in Jewish literature. But this did not imply that Peretz was old-fashioned. There was nothing he feared more than to cease being young; during his last decade he began to experiment again, particularly with plays. Just before he died (he was sixty-three at the time) he began to write juvenile poems and stories. Warsaw was then teeming with thousands of Jewish families which the Tsarist regime had uprooted from their frontier homes at the beginning of World War I. Hundreds of children had lost their parents in the process—and Peretz was one of the first to attend to the needs of these abandoned children by setting up children's homes and institutions. And it was for these children that Peretz, then already sick in body and spirit, composed light verse and charming stories. . . .

Peretz's death (of a heart attack on April 3, 1915) put an end to his career but not to his influence. On the contrary it has continued to grow, and is still growing. Like Rabbi Nachman Bratzlaver, the Hasidic Zaddik, a few of whose stories Peretz retold, he became even more of a master after his death. . . .

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ON THE HORIZON

THOUGHTS ON "A RAISIN IN THE SUN"

A Critical Review

GERALD WEALES

ON THE day that the New York Drama Critics' Award was announced, a student stopped me as I walked across the campus—where I pass as an expert on the theater—and asked a sensible question. Had *A Raisin in the Sun* won because it was the best play of the year, or because its author, Lorraine Hansberry, is a Negro? Even if the play is a good one (and, with reservations, I think it is), even if it were indisputably the best of the year, the climate of award-giving would make impossible its consideration on merit alone. Whenever an award goes to a playwright who is not a veteran of Broadway or to a play which is in some way unusual, the special case is almost certainly as important a factor in the voting as the play itself. The only contender this year that might have been chosen on its own merits (of which I think it has very few) was Tennessee Williams's *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Had *J.B.* got the award—and the smart money assumed it would and assumed, correctly, that it would also get the Pulitzer—special consideration would have derived from the image of Archibald MacLeish as the poet invading Broadway, and from the critical piety that longs for verse on the commercial stage. Had *A Touch of the Poet* got the award, respect for O'Neill as America's greatest playwright and the suspicion (unfounded) that this is very likely the last full-length play to be unearthed from the O'Neill papers and put on stage would have received ballots along with the play itself. It is, then, only sensible to assume that Lorraine Hansberry's being a Negro, and the first Negro woman to have a play on Broadway, had its influence on the voting critics.

Even if the balloting had been purely aesthetic, the award to Lorraine Hansberry would have been greeted as the achievement of a Negro—hailed in some places as an honor to American Negroes, dismissed in others as a well-meaning gesture from the Critics' Circle. Such reactions are inevitable at this time. Any prominent Negro—Marion Anderson or Jackie Robinson or Ralph Bunche—becomes a special hero to the Negro community (see the Negro newspapers and magazines), an example of what a Negro can be and do in the United States; such figures are heroes, also, to white Americans who feel a sense of guilt about what the average American Negro cannot be and do. Lists are still compiled, I suppose, of prominent American Jews or famous Americans of Italian or German or Irish origin, but they are no longer urgently needed, by in-group or out, as are the lists of the successful American Negroes. So long as the Negro remains an incompletely integrated part of American society (equal but separate, in the non-legal meaning of the phrase), the achievements of singer, baseball player, or diplomat may be admired as such, but his race will not be ignored—by Negro or white.

The Negro artist and intellectual is particularly marked by this situation. Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin, for example, admirable writers both, are Negro writers in a way that Saul Bellow and Herbert Gold are not Jewish writers. A critic may note,

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GERALD WEALES here contributes another of his pieces discussing the American theater today; his essay, "S. N. Behrman Comes Home," appeared in our issue of last March. Mr. Weales is on the staff of the English department of the University of Pennsylvania.

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as Richard Chase did recently in COMMENTARY,* that in *Henderson the Rain King* for the first time Saul Bellow does not use Jewish characters, but this is not the kind of operation that followed Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room,* by which it was possible to view the book as a Negro novel without Negro characters.

THE playwright who is a Negro is faced with a special problem. Broadway has a tradition of Negro shows, inevitably folksy or exotic, almost always musical, of which the only virtue is that Negro performers get a chance to appear as something more than filler. The obvious reaction to such shows is the protest play, the Negro agitprop, which can be as false to American Negro life as the musicals. A playwright with serious intentions, like Miss Hansberry, has to avoid both pitfalls, has to try to write not a Negro play, but a play in which the characters are Negroes. In an interview (New York *Times,* March 8, 1959), Miss Hansberry is reported as having said to her husband before she began *Raisin,* "I'm going to write a social drama about Negroes that will be good art." However good the art, unfortunately, the play will remain, in one sense, a Negro play. The *Times* interview made quite clear that Miss Hansberry was aware that she was writing as much for the American Negro as for the American theatre. Similarly, an article on Sidney Poitier, the play's star, in the *New York Times Magazine* (January 25, 1959), made the point that Poitier avoided roles that might "diminish the Negro's stature as a human being." Whatever his ambitions as an artist, the Negro playwright, like the Negro actor, is still forced into a propaganda role. The publicity for *A Raisin in the Sun,* the news stories about it, the excitement it stirred up among Negroes (never until *Raisin* had I seen a Philadelphia theatre in which at least half the audience was Negro) all emphasize that it is a play written by a Negro woman about Negroes, a fact which could hardly have been forgotten when the Critics' Award was passed out.

Having suggested that objectivity is impossible with respect to *A Raisin in the Sun,* I should like to make a few objective remarks about it. The play, first of all, is old-fashioned. Practically no serious playwright, in or out of America, works in such a determinedly naturalistic form as Miss Hansberry in her first play. The semi-documentary movies that cropped up at the end of World War II, and then television, particularly in the Chayefsky school of drama, took over naturalism so completely that it is doubtful whether the form will ever again be comfortable in the theater. It is now possible to accept on stage the wildest fantasy or the simplest suggestion; but the set that pretends to be a real room with real doors and real furniture has become more difficult to accept than a stylized tree. Ralph Alswang's set for *Raisin,* as murky and crowded and gadgety as the slum apartment it represents, is ingenious in its detail; but the realistic set, like the real eggs the young wife cracks for an imaginary breakfast, reaches for a verisimilitude that has become impossible. *Raisin* is the kind of play which demands the naturalism that Miss Hansberry has used, but in choosing to write such a play, she entered Broadway's great sack race with only a paper bag as equipment. Her distinction is that she has won the race this year, which proves, I suppose, that narrow naturalism is still a possible—if anachronistic—form.

If the set suggests 1910 and Eugene Walter, the play itself—in its concentration on the family in society—recalls the 30's and Clifford Odets. It tells the story of the Younger family and their escape from a too-small apartment on Chicago's South Side to a house in which they have space and air and, unfortunately but not insurmountably, the enmity of their white neighbors. The conflict within the play is between the dreams of the son, Walter Lee, who wants to make a killing in the big world, and the hopes of his mother and his wife, who want to save their small world by transplanting it to an environment in which it might conceivably flourish. The mechanical means by which this conflict is illuminated—the insurance money, its loss, the representative of the white neighborhood association—are completely artificial, plot devices at their most devised. Take the loss of the money, for example. From the first moment that Walter Lee mentions his plans for a profitable liquor store, his connections, the need for spreading money around in Springfield, the audience knows that the money will be stolen; sup-

*"The Adventures of Saul Bellow," April 1959.

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posedly, in good naturalistic tradition, the audience should sit, collective fingers crossed, hoping that he might be spared, that the dream might not be deferred and shrivel, like a raisin in the sun, as the Langston Hughes poem has it. I found myself, fingers crossed, hoping that the inevitable would not come, not for the sake of Walter Lee Younger, but for the sake of the play, of which the solid center was already too hedged with contrivances. No one's crossed fingers did any good.

Of the four chief characters in the play, Walter Lee is the most complicated and the most impressive. He is often unlikable, occasionally cruel. His sense of being trapped by his situation—class, race, job, prospects, education—transfers to his family, who become to him not fellow prisoners but complacent jailers. Their ways of coping with their condition are his defeats, for to him the open-sesame that will release him (change his status? change his color?) is money. The play is concerned primarily with his recognition that, as a man, he must begin from, not discard, himself, that dignity is a quality of men, not bank accounts. Walter Lee's penchant for taking center stage has forced his wife to become an observer in his life, but at the same time she is an accusation. For most of the play she wears a mask of wryness or the real cover of fatigue, but Miss Hansberry gives her two scenes in which the near-hysteria that lies beneath the surface is allowed to break through. The mother is a more conventional figure—the force, compounded of old virtues and the strength of suffering, that holds the family together. She is a sentimentalized mother figure, reminiscent of Bessie Burgess in *Awake and Sing*, but without Bessie's destructive power. The daughter, who wants to be a doctor, is out of place in this working-class family. Not that her ambition does not belong with the Youngers, but her surface characteristics—the flitting from one expensive fad to another—could not have been possible, on economic grounds alone, in such a household. Although Miss Hansberry, the daughter of a wealthy real estate man, may have enjoyed poking fun at a youthful version of herself, as reported in the *Times* interview, the result of putting the child of a rich man into a working-class home is incongruous.

Despite an incredible number of imperfections, *Raisin* is a good play. Its basic strength lies in the character and the problem of Walter Lee, which transcends his being a Negro. If the play were only the Negro-white conflict that crops up when the family's proposed move is about to take place, it would be an editorial, momentarily effective, and nothing more. Walter Lee's difficulty, however, is that he has accepted the American myth of success at its face value, that he is trapped, as Willy Loman was trapped, by a false dream. In planting so indigenous an American image at the center of her play, Miss Hansberry has come as close as possible to what she intended —a play about Negroes which is not simply a Negro play.

The play has other virtues. There are genuinely funny and touching scenes throughout. Many of these catch believably the chatter of a family—the resentments and the shared jokes—and the words have the ring of truth that one found in Odets or Chayefsky before they began to sound like parodies of themselves. In print, I suspect, the defects of *Raisin* will show up more sharply, but on stage—where, after all, a play is supposed to be—the impressive performances of the three leads (Poitier, Ruby Dee, and Claudia McNeil) draw attention to the play's virtues.

A RAISIN IN THE SUN deserved the Critics' Award as much as any other play of this season, and more than most. That statement, however, is as much an accusation of the season as it is praise of the play. Every fall, when the advertisements begin to bloom in the pages of the New York *Times*, I am filled again with certainty that something is about to happen on Broadway. Every spring, when the results are in, I am aware of a dream deferred, a raisin shriveled. This season, however, has been duller than most. I cannot recall any moment of real excitment. There were small pleasures, small merits, but no revelations. The one real experiment in form, Shimon Wincelberg's *Kataki*, a full-length monologue play (and it came from television), was put quietly to sleep by tepid reviews. It is perverse to expect something really fine, I suppose. The Ibsens, the Shaws, the Chekhovs have always been the exceptions in the theater and they have had to make their way against the theater itself. The Broadway business is at present congenial to adaptations of novels and television plays, to mechanical comedies, to the Pinero-like seriousness of

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William Inge and Robert Anderson, to anything that is safe, even though a high percentage of the safeties turn out to be bombs.

American fiction, it seems to me, is alive now and aware of its life. American drama, except perhaps for musical comedy (*Candide,* after all, is the best American play in many years), is, if not dead, often deadly—and does not particularly care that it is. Arthur Miller is the only one of the postwar American playwrights whose concern with the theater is likely to engender excitement and he, perhaps wisely, works slowly and appears infrequently. Even Tennessee Williams, whose mixture of old expressionism and new neuroticism once had vitality, seems now mechanical in his flamboyance; *Sweet Bird of Youth,* for all its acclaim, looked to me like the same old rabbit out of the same old hat. There is something sad about the fact that the Critics' Award went to a play that not only uses an outdated form, but often uses it clumsily. I do not want to disparage Miss Hansberry's achievement with *A Raisin in the Sun.* It is a first play and a good one; more important, it has hold of one of the central dramatic problems of our time. If one were to compare her with Chekhov, however, as Brooks Atkinson did in his review, the comparison could hardly be as flattering as the *Times* critic made it. I hope that Lorraine Hansberry will go on to write more plays and that all of them will be as good as or better than *A Raisin in the Sun,* but I do not expect to find in them any real hope for a vital American theater. *A Raisin in the Sun* is the best play of the year, but the American theater today is an old man in a dry season. Where does that leave us? Waiting for fall, of course.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE REVOLUTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Notes on C. V. Wedgwood's History of the Puritan Rebellion

ANATOLE SHUB

O what fears and tears, cries and prayers, night and day, was there in many places, and in my dear mother's house in particular. I was then about twelve or thirteen years of age, and though I was afraid to be killed, yet was I weary of so much fasting and praying.—A Reminiscence of the English Civil War.

I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the Book and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying "What shall I do?"—John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress.

To be a Seeker is to be of the best sect after a Finder, and such a one shall every faithful humble Seeker be in the end.—Oliver Cromwell.

FEW episodes loom as large in the history of democracy as the English Revolution of 1638-1660. Freedom of conscience, independent courts, parliamentary supremacy, the two-party system, the "right" of revolution itself all stem from the Great Rebellion which overthrew King Charles I and made an East Anglian squire, Oliver Cromwell, sovereign of the British Isles. Yet our own time, so fascinated with revolutions, has difficulty grasping the spirit of the first of the great ones. Locked in the neat political categories of empiricism, we are puzzled by Cromwell and his men, who were simultaneously "democratic" and "totalitarian," "libertarian" and "puritanical," "nationalist" and "universal," capable of massacring Irish Catholics and liberating the Jews. Because so many of our assumptions are secular and materialist, we cannot comprehend social revolutionaries whose politics started with religion; and therefore seek all kinds of latent motives beneath their manifest faith.

What was the Puritan Revolution, theorists ask: a medieval contest among monarch, barons, and squires—the last of the religious wars—the first bourgeois revolution — or the ambiguous climax of the mass revolt which underlay the entire Reformation? Marx admired the Puritans, exempting Cromwell's republic from his rule of the growing impoverishment of England's masses under capitalism; workers' real wages, he noted, rose steadily during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. A later German Socialist, Eduard Bernstein, amplified Marx's views in a respectful biography of Cromwell. Max Weber and R. H. Tawney, on the other hand, linked Puritanism with capitalism, and their notions of the "Protestant ethic" are fashionable today. The professional historians seem perplexed. One expert, Maurice Ashley, who published a book during the 1930's called *Oliver Cromwell: Conservative Dictator*, wrote another last year, entitled *The Greatness of Oliver Cromwell*. (In between, he delivered a radio talk entitled "Oliver Cromwell: Spiritual Anarchist.") BBC broadcasts on the Puritans in

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1958 provoked fierce controversies, historians as well as laymen contesting the merits and significance of the Cavaliers and Roundheads, Covenanters and Independents, Levellers, Diggers, Millenarians, and Fifth Monarchy Men.

Evidently what our time understands least about the Puritans is what they themselves understood best. Theirs was the age of Donne, Marvell, and Milton, and—quite incomprehensibly to us—its medium of intellectual exchange was religion, for Cavaliers as well as Roundheads. When the Scots held King Charles captive at Newcastle, their preacher intoned the 52nd Psalm at him: "Why boastest thou thy self, thou tyrant: that thou canst do mischief? The tongue imagineth wickedness; and with lies thou cuttest like a sharp razor." The King replied with the 56th Psalm: "Be merciful unto me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me."

One may or may not choose to date our whole modern era of revolutions from the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures—the "Old Testament"—into the vernacular languages of Europe. Assuredly, however, the generation which made the Puritan Revolution was the first reared on the authorized English Bible, completed under King James I in 1611. Unlike the Russian revolutionaries, who aped the French Jacobins, and the French themselves, who imitated the Roman Republic, the Puritans sought their models among the Judges and Prophets of Israel. To simple people in most of England and southern Scotland, C. V. Wedgwood tells us, "the Old Testament was commonly better known than the New." Foreign visitors were astonished by Puritans who "give their sons Hebrew names and call their daughters after the virtues." These yeomen and squires, sailors and artisans, weavers and apprentices "unconsciously acquired the outlook, because they acquired the words, of the Chosen People. To the confident, self-reliant and assertive characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon were added tenacious Jewish fatalism and an unyielding confidence in a God who was theirs against the world."

In the Old Testament the Puritans saw man writ large, dealing directly with his God: Abraham, a shepherd, had seen the Lord; Jacob wrestled with Him; Moses, waif, outlaw, and rebel against Pharaoh, argued with Him. In an age when the King's right was called divine, the Puritans learned of Judges raised up by the people, of great decisions adopted by "the congregation of all Israel," "the assembly of the people." They pondered on such Kings as Rehoboam, son of Solomon, against whose exactions ten tribes rebelled, and whose tax collector, Adoram, was "stoned by all Israel."

Englishmen intoxicated by the explicit detail of the Law of Moses were prepared not only to challenge monarchs and priests, but to refashion property, marriage, diet, dress, society itself. If in the first stages of their revolution, the Puritans recalled Nathan and Elijah shaming prideful kings ("Wherefore has thou despised the word of the Lord, to do that which is evil in My sight?"), later they emulated Joshua and Gideon, leading the people of the Law out of the wilderness ("Justice, justice shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live").

The "enthusiasms" of the Puritans produced a proliferation of political ideas which have left their mark on almost every constitution in the world today. "Never," says Lytton Strachey, "did the human mind attain such magnificent height of self-assertiveness as in England about the year 1650."

TWO VOLUMES of Miss Wedgwood's definitive history of the Great Rebellion have already appeared; two more should complete the series. *The King's Peace, 1637-1641* (published by Macmillan in 1955) described how Charles I, in 1637 "the happiest King in Christendom," attempted to bend Scotch Presbyterians and Irish Catholics to the Anglican way of life; and how, stalemated by the Scots and needing money to fight the Irish, he was compelled by Parliament to betray his chief agents, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. *The King's War, 1641-1647* (Macmillan, 702 pp., $7.50) now tells how the Long Parliament, led by adroit John Pym, joined with the Scots to defeat Charles in the First Civil War. In her concluding volumes, Miss Wedgwood will describe how the Parliamentary forces split into two warring parties—English and Scotch Presbyterians on one side, Cromwell's Independents on the other (1647-1653); and how the Second Civil War culminated in the exhilarating, factious Commonwealth and Protectorate (1653-1658).

Miss Wedgwood's bias, if one can be detected, is Anglican, liberal, and mildly royalist, but her aim is not to write a tract for our time. Rather, she hopes "to give full importance and value to the admitted motives and the illusions of the men of the seventeenth century . . . to restore their immediacy of experience." Though

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comment on all the fashionable interpretations is implicit, her books are narrative history as it should be written. Her literary master is the Shakespeare of the chronicle plays. The leading actors of her drama are heightened by character and changing circumstance; the secondary personages contain the proper share of knaves, fools, and romantic heroes; and the talk of ordinary folk illuminates the nation these great men sought to rule. Faith is the meaning of the narrative, but its subject is life—various, many-textured, yet mysteriously consistent.

In her quest of "immediacy of experience," Miss Wedgwood makes no more at any point of Cromwell, for example, than was evident to his contemporaries—a sharp contrast to historians of the Russian Revolution, say, who place Lenin at the center of Russian politics in 1905, or Stalin in 1917. In all of her first volume, in fact, Cromwell appears only three times. These references appear casual, but there is conscious craft behind them. The first (in an introductory survey of 17th-century life) tells us that Cromwell was one of those who read Sir Walter Raleigh's exotic *History of the World;* this is a subliminal hint of the later Puritan fascination with overseas adventure. The second informs us that, in the first week of the Long Parliament, "the member for Cambridge City," Cromwell, rose to defend the imprisoned John Lilburne—future leader of the democratic Levellers, the "left opposition" of Cromwell's republic. And later, we learn that it was Cromwell, "a man of heavy, uninspiring presence but considerable eloquence," who made the "quiet opening move in the campaign to have all military appointments placed under the control of Parliament" (November 6, 1641); here is a foretaste of future irony, for the ensuing civil strife ended with Parliament's Army, under Cromwell, purging and at last dispersing Parliament.

We are two hundred pages into the second volume, seven hundred into the series—it is May 1643—before Miss Wedgwood undertakes to describe Cromwell at some length. Her spare account concludes with these words: "He strove after a rigid honesty, a pure and direct relationship with his Maker, and every letter he wrote, every troop he organized, every garrison he strengthened, every village he occupied or skirmish he won was for him part of a psalm in action, a ceaseless glorifying of God."

We do not, however, sense the depths of this "rigid honesty" until Marston Moor, Cromwell's first great military victory (July 2, 1644). Now we read the letter he wrote his sister's husband after the battle:

"Truly England and the Church of God hath a great favour from the Lord, in this great victory given to us, such as the like never was since this war began. . . . We never charged but we routed the enemy. The left wing, which I commanded, being our own horse, save a few Scots in the rear, beat all the Prince's horse, God made them as stubble to our swords. . . . Sir, God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon-shot. It brake his leg. We were necessitated to have it cut off, whereof he died. . . . There is your precious child full of glory, to know sin nor sorrow more. He was a gallant young man, exceedingly gracious. God give you his comfort."

Similarly, we get only random phrases from the King until his decisive defeat at Naseby (June 13, 1645); then Miss Wedgwood lets this second Rehoboam express his tragedy. Advised to negotiate with Parliament, Charles replied: ". . . speaking either as a mere soldier or statesman, I must say that there is no probability but of my ruin. Yet as a Christian I must tell you, that God will not suffer rebels to prosper, nor this cause to be overthrown. And whatever personal punishment it shall please him to inflict upon me must not make me repine, much less give over this quarrel. . . . [A] composition with them at this time is nothing else but a submission, which, by the grace of God, I am resolved against, whatever it cost me, for I know my obligation to be, both in conscience and in honor, neither to abandon God's cause, injure my successors, nor foresake my friends. . . . He that will stay with me at this time must expect and resolve either to die for a good cause or (which is worse) to live as miserable in maintaining it as the violence of insulting rebels can make him."

THE accounts in *The King's War* of battles, campaigns, local uprisings, and clan feuds are in the manner of Tolstoy, depicting war as an infinite series of confused, unrelated decisions by men rarely sure of what they are doing. In the midst of war, there is time for such human sidelights as Cardinal Mazarin of France instructing his envoy to aid the cause of royalism —and to buy up Royalist art treasures cut-rate.

Miss Wedgwood uses women as a Greek chorus, to reveal the emotions of a people trapped in history. Thus, during the King's attempt to disperse Parliament, the wife of one member, "Mrs. Venn . . . sat weeping and ring-

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ing her hands in a neighbor's shop. She had it for sure that . . . her husband [was] in danger to be slain, but a valiant grocer, alternately brandishing a pistol and tapping his sword-hilt, consoled her with promises of vengeance."

When the King's plot had failed, and a fanatic tossed a paper into the Royal coach headed "To your tents, O Israel," Miss Wedgwood describes how "apprentices built blockades of benches across the streets; women boiled cauldrons of water to pour from the windows. . . ." After the Commons rejected a compromise on August 7, 1643, "a crowd of poor women came clamoring to Westminster asking too late for peace . . . the guards dispersed them with blows and some reckless firing. There were casualties, among them a young girl who had no part in the demonstration but had slipped out to draw water."

The tragedy of nameless women reaches a climax with the Puritan triumph at Naseby: "In the desperate flight of the King's cavalry . . . no care had been taken for the wagons and coaches which accompanied the army. . . . In many coaches ladies and officers' wives were taken, and some women, 'full of money and rich apparel,' who were neither ladies nor wives. Many of these wealthier camp followers bought mercy from their victors. . . . But mercy was denied to the common camp followers, the drabs and drudges, many of whom the soldiers killed. Afterwards, shamefaced at this massacre of women, they said they were 'Irish women of cruel countenances,' armed with long knives; it seems more likely that they were Welsh, crying out in a strange language, and defending themselves with the cutlery they carried to dress and cook meat for their menfolk."

Ten lines later, we read Cromwell's report to Parliament on the battle: "This is none other but the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him. . . . Honest men served you faithfully in this action, Sir, they are trusty. I beseech you in the name of God not to discourage them. . . . He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for."

The last sentence was (deservedly) the political headline of the day, but Miss Wedgwood, juxtaposing the faith of the general with the murder of the Welsh bawds, has carried us back to the righteous warrior Jehu, agent of God's prophet Elisha, exultant as dogs devour Jezebel.

By her choice of material, rather than deliberate suggestion, Miss Wedgwood is also constantly evoking parallels with later events. Some of these seem to be mere coincidence*; many are precedents which the Puritans set for future revolutions†; still others seem contemporaneous though they have no connection with revolutions. Her account of the King's "prerogative courts," headed by the Star Chamber, belongs in this last category. These courts, made up of government officials outside the common-law judicial system, at first curbed the abuses of wealthy nobles, but under the Stuarts they were used mainly against sedition. The sequel seems familiar:

"The worst characteristic of the prerogative courts was that they encouraged informers and were by no means always competent to distinguish between false information and true; the innocent might be wrecked in the Star Chamber as well as the guilty. Certainly of late years high words at the village pump or a quarrel in an alehouse could, through the malice of an informer, bring a frightened victim before the Star Chamber. . . . A sensible justice . . . remarked that if informers continued at this rate every scold's quarrel in the land would come up before the King's council."

The principle which underlay this administrative justice, the balance between liberty and national security, was defined by Strafford at his trial: "The prerogative of the Crown and the propriety of the subject have [mutual relations] . . . the excess of a prerogative is oppression, of a pretended liberty in the subject disorder and anarchy. The prerogative must be used as God

*Charles's over-confident Queen, Henrietta Maria, foreshadows Marie Antoinette and the Tsarina Alexandra. The Earl of Manchester, Cromwell's chief in the early days, ducked battle in the best manner of George McClellan and was dumped accordingly (Cromwell playing both Stanton and Grant in the maneuver). The Royalist partisan war waged by Montrose in Scotland and "the Red O'Neill" in Ireland suggests 1793 in the Vendée. The Windmill Tavern, headquarters of the Puritan radicals around Lilburne, is a preview of the Cordeliers and Jacobin Clubs.

†The London county authorities set up a Committee of Public Safety (borrowing the name from the communistic Anabaptists of Munster a century earlier), and Parliament's executive body for several years was also called the Committee of Safety. The Puritans recruited Royalist prisoners, suborned local commanders, were quick to secure control of the fleet, proposed peace to all foreign powers, and soon put the financing of the war on a revolutionary basis by ordering the sequestration of Royalist estates. The revolutionaries were also more adept at propaganda throughout.

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doth his omnipotency, at extra-ordinary occasions; the laws . . . must have place at all other time, and yet there must be a prerogative if there must be extra-ordinary occasions."

The defeat of this principle, so far as the King was concerned, was one of the Puritans' noblest achievements. The irony was that Parliament, unable to convict Strafford at a fair trial, did away with him by passing a bill of attainder.

By such means—by showing us the many levels at which the revolution operated, the variety of its issues and emotions, the differences between areas, within factions, even within families—Miss Wedgwood fashions an intricate historical mosaic for which the concept of the "Puritan ethic" is a shoddy substitute. That concept, as developed by Weber and others, ties the moral protest of the Reformation to the rise of the capitalist class. To the reader of Miss Wedgwood's books, it will seem—at least so far as the English Puritans are concerned—at best a playful sociological conceit.*

The evidence for interpreting the Puritan Revolution as bourgeois is twofold: geographical and biographical. The geographical evidence is the disposition of the rival armies in the First Civil War. Parliament held London, *most* of the wool-making towns of the East and South, and *most* ports engaged in trade with the continent; the King was stronger in *most* rural areas of northern and western England. Miss Wedgwood shows in some detail, however, that in each of these social divisions it was a matter of "most," rather than of "all." As for London, the metropolis inevitably *was* the winning side once it declared itself. A century before, it had welcomed Catholic Mary Tudor in preference to the Protestant Jane Grey; more than commercial interest or religion was involved. Finally, Parliament enlisted not only four-fifths of England's wealth but six-sevenths of its population; in such circumstances, it seems rather difficult to establish "bourgeois domination."

Even granting for argument's sake that the City of London, the wool lobby, and the shipping interests dominated Parliament in England, the revolution would never have started without the Scots, in the confidence of whose support Parliament first defied Charles. In Scotland the feudal nobility led the opposition to the King; "the old medieval struggle, never fully resolved, between the Kings and barons, had taken on a new form shaped by the ideas of the 17th century. By making the cause of Kirk and conscience their own, the Scots lords had found the surest way of weakening the power of the Crown by attacking the Crown's instruments, the bishops and the episcopal clergy."

The more substantial evidence for a "bourgeois" interpretation of Puritanism comes from an analysis of the social background of the members of the Long Parliament. It is the sort of case Charles Beard made out about the makers of our Constitution. Miss Wedgwood does not slight it: she fully describes the Parliamentarians' business interests, the tangled roots of their agitation against taxes and monopolies, and such dubious enterprises as the Providence Company, a West Indian speculation in which most of Pym's camarilla was involved.

Nevertheless, the weight of her history serves to undermine the "bourgeois" interpretation. She shows, first, that at the beginning of the civil wars the landed and commercial classes were quite divided; and second, that the democratic, anti-clerical emotions of the common people, once politically organized in the New Model Army, radically transformed the nature of the war.

"Men of education and position," Miss Wedgwood concludes, after a laborious poring over of local documents and archives, "were very evenly divided" at the outset. It is "a false impression" that the King "had the aristocracy of the kingdom largely on his side. It was not so.

*The broader theory associating Protestantism and capitalism (and *ipse dixit* with "bourgeois" democracy) always had a chicken-and-egg quality. If Protestantism caused capitalism, what about the Hanseatic League and such financier families as the Medici, some of whom became very unreforming Popes? If, on the other hand, it was capitalism that caused Protestantism, why was Catholic France more developed economically than Lutheran Germany for *three centuries* after the Reformation? In any case, Weber's theory gave no hint of the strategic differences in "ethic" which developed between England and Germany, both capitalist and Protestant, after 1933.

It is time we recognized that, while Western democracy did begin with the Reformation, it was the Whig historians of the 19th century who gave the bourgeoisie credit for both. The later, anti-bourgeois writers who (unnecessarily) adopted Whig assumptions felt compelled to denigrate both the spirit of the Reformation and the democratic ideal by portraying them as class phenomena. On the other hand Lewis Mumford argues persuasively in *The Condition of Man* that the Reformation was a democratic reaction against the capitalism which had already emerged as early as the 13th century.

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. . . Only a minority of the lords remained at Westminister, but of those who withdrew few actively joined the King. . . . The great lords who had built their position during the economic revolution of the last centuries, on crumbling monasteries and expanding trade, were by no means all to be found on the same side. . . . The leading citizens of the great cities were equally divided, not least in London. . . . The lines of division—if distinctions so various and confused could be called lines—were those of group and sectional loyalties."

Soon, however, something resembling class interests did begin to appear—but they were not bourgeois. In the Book of Leviticus, it was written: "Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor favor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shall thou judge thy neighbor." Increasingly as the revolution progressed, the Puritan cause drew on those whom the mighty had neglected: farmers, weavers, artisans, sailors, young apprentices, the sons of brewers and the like. Ship-money and other forms of royal taxation had hurt the poor as well as the middle classes, and the economic monopolies that the King granted had meant, for the common people, high "administered" prices for necessities of life. When Parliament, "the King's Great Counsel," fought defense spending, taxation, and monopolies, the streets responded with such ballads as:

Who did regard our poverty, our tears?
Our wants, our miseries, our many fears? . . .
Bless the Great Counsel of the King. . . .

When Charles dissolved the Short Parliament of 1640 and arrested its leaders, the "May Day riots" followed:

"The rumbling discontent of London, the great, angry Protestant seaport, suddenly burst into a roar of rage. Apprentices, effervescent with May Day humour, joined the mariners and dock hands, a whole angry, young, vehement population. . . . They came together on the south bank, from Southwark and Blackfriars: someone beat a drum to attract more. In their hundreds they poured westward, making for Laud's palace at Lambeth. Laud fled and his servants stood on their guard while the rabble surged round the walls and a young seaman tried to break in the door with a crowbar. The ringleaders were arrested but the apprentices smashed into the gaol and let them out. 'God bless them all, God speed them all!' cried an excited Londoner as he fought back the constables. . . ."*

This and other early riots were suppressed, but by 1643 Captain Hotham, a moderate Roundhead, observed: "The necessitous people of the whole kingdom will presently rise in mighty numbers. If this unruly sort have once cast the rider, it will run like wildfire in the example through all the counties of England." Parliament had armed these "necessitous people" to fight their betters—a decisive step. A Royalist described their state of mind: "The gentry (say they) have been our masters a long time, and now we chance to master them." And he commented: "Now they know their strength, it shall go hard but they will use it."

The Psalm-singing humble folk of the New Model Army—sustained by Puritan preachers, led by the brave, tortured, generous Cromwell—carried to its ultimate implications the revolution against arbitrary authority that had always inhered in the Puritan protest. "The power is in you, the people," the preacher Dell told the troops besieging Oxford; "keep it, part not with it." Soon afterward, Lieutenant Colonel John Lilburne was demanding universal manhood suffrage.

"The connection between authority in religion," Miss Wedgwood writes, "and authority in secular society was, to the majority of educated men, self-evident. The Anglican and the Presbyterian systems, each in its own way, established and sustained a form of social order. But the Anabaptists, and therefore it was believed most other sectaries, since they broke out in Germany a century before, had preached equality, anarchy, and community of goods. The English [had not yet gone so far]. . . . But, it was argued, if every man was to be free to choose and practice his own religion, if all doctrine was to be tolerated, there would in the end be no means of sustaining property or hierarchy against the prophets and messiahs who would surely arise."

The churches of the Independents were democratic; "the congregation came together of its own will, chose its own minister by free election, supported him by contributions freely

*Miss Wedgwood provides other such vivid scenes—the London apprentices and weavers in 1641 shouting "No bishops! No bishops!"; and taunting the Royal party with derisive cries of "Privilege!"; the country folk of the West Riding, armed with scythes, rising to support a Parliamentary detachment at Bradford in 1643; etc.

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given." Their members sought the same freedom for other men; Roger Williams appeared briefly in England to advocate liberty of conscience for Jews, Papists, and Turks, while Cromwell urged "union and right understanding between the godly people—Scots, English, Jews, Gentiles, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and all." Freedom of conscience implies the equality of souls, and the free Independent churches, Miss Wedgwood reports, were soon "taken by some as the pattern for a reformed secular order, a society which came together by free consent of the governed, by agreement of the people." Indeed, the Agreement of the People was the name of one constitution proposed for Cromwell's republic—a century before Rousseau's social contract.

It was the democracy at the heart of Puritanism which led the oligarchic Presbyterian leaders to parley hopefully with the King between 1646 and 1649, and to battle the Independents for several years thereafter. After Cromwell's death, the Presbyterians (and the City of London) joined with the Anglicans to restore monarchy even at the price of episcopacy—and thus founded the Tory party.

THE story Miss Wedgwood will tell in her concluding volumes is one of the most significant in all history—how the armed minority of Independents, led by an inspired general of cavalry, nearly fastened on Britain in the mid-17th century much of the order that finally emerged, through other processes, in the 20th. The Puritans, indeed, saw the future, but they could not make it work. They were undermined not so much by the old monarcho-feudal order, nor even by "Merrie England," as by their own dissensions and by the secularism, science, nationalism, and democracy their revolt had helped engender. Their attempt to secure political freedom and social justice within the single framework of righteousness may have been Christianity's last effort at serious politics. Within a few generations, revealed religion itself was (as an Anglican bishop sadly noted in 1736) "discovered to be fictitious . . . among all people of discernment."

Multiform intelligence replaced monolithic morality as man's guide; religious man yielded, in the 18th century, to political man and, in the next, to economic man. In the sixtieth year of the 20th century, however, having experienced the pathology of Nazism and Bolshevism, and having reopened our eyes (like Raleigh) to the strange, great world outside Western experience, we begin to see once again that society is more than politics or economics. Three hundred years after Cromwell's death, we are at last able to view with some sympathy the Puritans' effort to regulate not merely the institutions of government but the conduct of life. Though their faith now seems naive, we are beginning to glimpse, as they thought they had, a relation between the inner lives of human beings and their social order. Neither the dogmatic Lenin nor the optimistic Rousseau could have, but a Puritan would have, sensed connections, for example, between the cultural chaos, economic hysteria, religious hatred, and sexual disarray of Weimar Germany and the political nihilism which followed.

The Puritans realized in their marrow, like Jews of old, that life is whole, society organic, the problem of justice universal. (Perhaps that is why Marx and Bernstein, both Jews, admired them, while Weber and Tawney felt the need to reduce them to economic men.) Today, we are again groping toward an appreciation of the subtle ties between work, love, art, belief, and community; that is the drift of such contemporary phenomena as neo-Freudianism, the reaction against aestheticism, the anguished debates over education, the concern with the symbolism of the mass media. If there is ever a new radical movement in our history, it will surely not be puritanical in Cotton Mather's way; but it may well be Puritan in the sense that a fusion of all these now-disparate elements of life, rather than divisive fission, must be its object in a society already quite atomized. Thus, the period which C. V. Wedgwood is to describe in the final books of her history may be relevant to an understanding of our own future.

She gives us its character as she brings the curtain down on *The King's War* in the spring of 1647. Charles Stuart is in the hands of Parliament, his country fatigued after six years of civil strife. Yet "the future of England, disordered and uncertain though it seemed, was bright with hope. Among the sectaries there was talk of a coming millennium and the Rule of the Saints. Sometimes it was conceived in terms practical enough; Hugh Peter held up before the eyes of his countryman the living example of New England. In seven years in that land of promise, he would boast, 'I never saw beggar, nor heard an oath, nor looked upon a drunkard.' If such things could be achieved across the Atlantic, why not at home? The moment was at hand for building the New Jerusalem."

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Nuclear Arms & the Cold War

To the Editor of Commentary:

Britain, G. L. Arnold insists (in "Britain and the Bomb," May) is tired of the cold war: "The spring of 1959 finds the British government and public in a mood to have done with the cold war." Evidence of this mood Mr. Arnold finds in the Aldermaston march, which the *Spectator* reports "provided the greatest turn-out for any cause that London has seen since the war." But . . . he has got strontium 90 and the cold war inextricably mixed up; he identifies the Aldermaston marches with opposition to the cold war. . . .

This confusion results in indecisiveness on the author's part as to the proper stance an "analyst of world affairs" ought to take vis-à-vis campaigns for nuclear disarmament. They are frankly a bit annoying ("irritants"—but "minor"); they can't be ignored, for 15,000 persons marched last Easter (say such things are "inseparable from living"); they can be minimized only with difficulty, for some of the persons joining them are important and sensible (say "it will not do to suggest that the campaign has been taken over by the Communists," throw in "though launched by outsiders"; and concede "it can no longer be written off as a pacifist stunt"); but serious treatment of them is out of the question. . . . One has to play it cool (admit "The protest marchers in fact have a political case" but question their acuity "What good they can do . . . is not clear"); and above all maintain one's poise ("If it were not for this . . . the political scene at the moment would be pretty dull").

This is bad enough. But the confusion underlying it is especially deplorable in view of the author's reasoned conclusion that "there *must* be, if Britain is to survive—a *modus vivendi* that takes the deadly sting out of the cold war."

The "deadly sting" is indeed what most of us find objectionable in the cold war. Can it be that we all . . . have a good deal more in common with the Aldermaston marchers than we find it presently convenient to publicize?

Cecil Miller

Manhattan, Kansas

Mr. Arnold *writes:*

I am not quite sure what it is that Mr. Miller finds objectionable about my remarks on the Aldermaston marchers. . . . However, I am prepared to offer an explanation of my attitude which I hope will strike Mr. Miller as reasonable: living, as I do, in England, I am conscious that most of my feilow countrymen share, to a greater or lesser degree, the apprehensions which lie behind the annual protest march, and it is precisely for this reason that some of us are put off by the crankiness which tends to creep into pacifist demonstrations.

Specifically, I (we) should be happier if the anti-nuclear campaign did not employ such absurd arguments as that a "moral lead" on Britain's part is all that is required to promote universal disarmament and/or control of nuclear weapons. This is nonsense . . . From a British standpoint there is a case for getting out of the nuclear race and letting the United States carry the whole burden. This is what the marchers are really after, but it is probably not what their American sympathizers would want to happen. Personally I am all for self-preservation, and nothing would give me greater immediate satisfaction than the thought that the country I inhabit has contracted out of world affairs; but I should not claim any moral status for my purely selfish feelings in this regard. Since I was trying to picture the British scene as a whole, I felt it necessary to stress the element of insularity which of late has come to dominate British opinion. . . . In my view this semi-conscious urge to withdraw into one's national shell accounts for the popularity of Mr. Macmillan's recent excursions *and* for the greater public support which the anti-nuclear campaign is winning, notwithstanding its close association with the left wing of the Labor party. These are all the manifestations of the same current of opinion. If one happens to believe that the present moment is not particularly well chosen for a display of sentiments which are evidently not shared by Britain's European associates, one will be inclined to restrain whatever sympathy one may have for the long-term aims of the protest marchers. I have yet to discern among their backers anything like a reasoned concern for the freedom and safety of other Europeans.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Fantasy of Israel

EXODUS. By LEON URIS. Doubleday. 626 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by JOEL BLOCKER

LIKE many bestsellers, *Exodus* (a quarter-of-a-million copies sold to date; 30-odd weeks on the best-seller list; current sale 8,000 copies a week) was written with one eye on the movies. Mr. Uris previously converted his best-selling *Battle Cry* into a film, and wrote the screenplay for *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*. When this book was conceived four or five years ago, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer contracted for the movie rights and financed the author's trip to Europe and Israel "to research the story." Thus, *Exodus* is not really a novel at all, but a sketch for a scenario with a few prose accretions—some simplified and sentimentalized Jewish history, large doses of Zionist publicity pamphlets ground down to fine pap, etc., etc. The distinctive quality of the book is cinematic; it contains an almost exhaustive repertoire of film devices (fade-out, close-up, montage) rendered in prose terms. Mr. Uris himself will do the final screenplay.

Exodus's major characters—Ari and Jordana Ben Canaan, the cold, single-minded sabras; Karen Clement, a deracinated but spiritually uplifted German refugee; Dov Landau, her lover, an embittered survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto *and* a concentration camp; and the young American heroine, Kitty Fremont—stand in roughly the same relation to the reality of Israel as Scarlett O'Hara, Rhett Butler, and Ashley Wilkes do to the American Civil War and Reconstruction South. Like *Gone With the Wind*, *Exodus* shows a scrupulous regard for the small facts of history, but sacrifices genuine historical complexity for the sake of the epic-sized image.

There is a difference, however. Margaret Mitchell was born and lived in the South; she spoke its language, and knew intimately the real-life counterparts, or descendants, of her stereotypes. Mr. Uris, despite his "research," lacked these advantages. The result is that *Exodus* falls back on a heterogeneous collection of attitudes, sentiments, idealizations, exaggerations, and out-and-out myths about Israel which have been current in the Western countries. The book is perhaps the ultimate crystallization of the Western fantasy about Israel—a "never-never land," as A. V. Sherman has characterized it (COMMENTARY, April 1959), "in which the normal laws of society are suspended, life has no seamy side, and people are motivated by ideas and ideals rather than by interests and prejudices."

Here we see Israel as an idea incarnate, dynamic, brave, pure in its striving for goodness and serenity, unadulterated by the presence of evil or self-interest; a state whose only problem is the savage, sadistic enemies on its borders; a land whose children are blond-haired, blue-eyed descendants of intrepid Biblical heroes; a country, finally, more *Hebrew* than *Jewish*. This is an impossible myth for the Israelis to live up to; it can only obscure their real problems and achievements.

THE overwhelming success of *Exodus* is due to its exceptional ability to tell its readers what they want to believe, in simple, easily graspable terms. The history of Zionism, for example, which occupies so much space in the book's many flashbacks, seems like a one-way express highway: from the brain of Theodor Herzl directly to the War of Independence. Herzl himself is canonized and dehumanized as the "man who could not forget . . . Dreyfus's hour of disgrace in the Paris courtyard," and the checkered development of Zionist ideology is almost completely disregarded; all that is most distinctive and individual about Zionism is omitted in order not to disturb the image.

The establishment of the state and the War of Liberation are similarly reduced to a single common denominator. Mr. Uris's recreation of the November 1947 Partition decision reads like bad Yiddish melodrama ("Everyone leaned forward as Evatt got to his feet. . . . 'Australia votes in favor of partition'. . . . A buzz of speculation went up. Weizmann leaned close to Barak's

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ear. 'Do you think it might be a trend in the Commonwealth?' "). Any suggestion that the Jews were engaged in mundane lobbying during those fateful days is absent. The war is treated simply as a fight between good guys and bad guys. The Arab refugee problem is dismissed in the following terms: "The Arabs would have the world believe that the Palestine Arab Refugee is unique. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every war man has waged has created refugees, homeless and displaced people. Today . . . five years after the end of World War II, displaced people number in the tens of millions. This is the very nature of war."

The problems of Israel's postwar development are either barely hinted at, or whitewashed, or completely ignored. The austerity years, the economic difficulties, the burden of the new immigrants are merely glossed over. In the task of absorbing the new immigrants, Mr. Uris says, Israel "was not a melting pot, it was a pressure cooker"; but the tensions and antagonisms that have arisen as a result of the accelerated mingling of different cultures, the existence of a very subtle color bar or scale, of a whole range of problems which characterize Israel distinctively, are simply not mentioned. A neat upside-down trick is performed in dealing with the acknowledged decrease in collective land development projects: "The conditions on the frontier were brutal. . . . Death lay on one side of them, unfertile land on the other. Yet—still another of the nation's miracles—Israel's youth volunteered to spend their entire lives in border settlements."

This last statement is one of the grosser distortions in *Exodus*. There was, in fact, a considerable falling off in "pioneer spirit" after 1948, particularly among the youth; relatively few of them could be induced to stay for more than four or five years in any remote spot, much less volunteer "to spend their entire lives on border settlements." There was never any wholesale desertion or ideological revolt, and many young people served and continue to serve in the outlying villages; nevertheless, there was a decline. The youth from Tel Aviv or even a rural settlement is, like his counterpart in the West, often more interested in a university education and professional or scientific career than in a life devoted to developing the land.

Mr. Uris's portraiture of the sabra contains more fancy than fact, although he is not the first to glamorize the Israeli native-born. Indeed, he paints in a good many of the idealized characteristics that so many people, both in Israel and abroad, associate with the sabra—coldness and arrogance in the presence of strangers, straightforwardness and lack of sentimentality, extreme patriotism anchored in an attachment to the Land of Israel, familiarity with the Old Testament, contempt for Diaspora Jewry and a lack of interest in its history, etc. In making use of all these traits, most of which are accurate, the author has mixed in a few of his own vivid colors; the resulting canvas contains a few of the zaniest absurdities ever associated with Israel's young generation. *Exodus's* sabras dance the *hora* and grow huge mustaches, but they also make love to one another while cooing passages from the *Song of Songs;* they are good soldiers, but are constrained to shout references from the Bible to each other before joining battle: " 'Remember, you are fighting at the place where Samson was born!' 'In this valley David met Goliath. . . . ' "

The insertions are utter nonsense, of course, but—like much of the fancifulness and plain bad writing of this book—they function very well in conveying an idea. Mr. Uris's sabras are somewhat more than human. "This was no army of mortals," we are told of the *Palmach*. "These were the ancient Hebrews! These were the faces of Dan and Reuben and Judah and Ephraim! These were Samsons and Deborahs and Joabs and Sauls. It was the army of Israel, and no force on earth could stop them for the power of God was within them."

WHAT is especially significant about Mr. Uris's myth of the sabra is, however, not the pure fancy of the Biblical faces, but the emphasis on Hebrewness as against Jewishness. This dichotomy is not only implicitly expressed by the Israelis in the book; it is subtly reinforced throughout by the articulated response to Israel on the part of the many Americans, mostly Gentile, whom the author has inserted in the story. Kitty Fremont, the heroine ("She was one of those great American traditions like Mom's apple pie, hot dogs, and the Brooklyn Dodgers. For Kitty Fremont was the proverbial 'girl next door' "), feels there is "something different about Jews. They aren't like us." Initially, she "fears the power of Palestine," but as the story progresses, she comes to feel closer and closer to the Israelis—her love affair with Ari Ben Canaan, the cold sabra, hinges on this—and at the end she has almost completely identified with their struggles. While not actively anti-Semitic, she distrusts and feels

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distant from American Jews, but she eventually comes to identify the sabra, despite his exoticism, with her "kind of people."

An American Jew expresses the sentiment that "every time the Palmach blows up a British depot or knocks the hell out of some Arabs he's winning respect for me. He's making a liar out of everyone who tells me Jews are yellow. These guys over here are fighting my battle for respect." This kind of rhetoric, which seeks to establish contact with the Israeli on the level of mutual Jewishness, is reiterated several times by various American Jews in the book. Together with Kitty Fremont's romance with the Hebrews, it suggests the underlying reasons for the attraction that an idealized Israel, as here portrayed, holds for Jews and Gentiles. A strong element of anti-Semitism—dislike of the Jew—predisposes the Gentile to think of Israel in non-Jewish terms. He readily identifies with the new kind of Jew, the Hebrew; perhaps he is relieved of a certain measure of guilt he previously felt because of his dislike of the Jew. The Jew, on the other-hand, while cognizant of the gulf separating himself from his Hebrew cousins, is forced to seek kinship in their mutual Jewishness, and is not always successful.

Jew and Gentile alike think of the Israeli initially as a stranger. The Gentile makes contact on a "human" level; the Jew fails, or has failed so far, on a Jewish level. The great irony is that in all important respects the Israeli is much more Jewish than either of his two admirers suppose: more Jewish, more conventional, more human and much more likable than they seem to be capable of believing. The success of *Exodus* has brought that irony into relief, at the same time that it has reinforced the reasons for its existence.

Sunday-Supplement Apocalypse

THE HUMAN CONDITION. By HANNAH ARENDT. University of Chicago Press. 333 pp. $4.75.

Reviewed by LINCOLN REIS

WHY should so many critics look upon this book as brilliant rather than presumptuous? It has a grandiose intention: to diagnose what Dr. Arendt calls "man's condition." It promises to illuminate "politics, aesthetics, economics, history, the growth of psychology and the

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social sciences" as well as man's probable fate. It offers itself as a work of radically original insight, at the same time that it follows established authorities whose traditional phrases provide the comforting security of the familiar.

Dr. Arendt enlists Marx, the Church Fathers, Plato, Aristotle, Locke, the Bible, and Adam Smith in the service of her plan. These authorities man her front lines; a host of lesser worthies are marshaled in a thousand footnotes. Rather like a party whip, she attempts to keep them in line with her argument, and when they don't agree she remonstrates with them. *The Human Condition* is thus supported by a formidable apparatus. But beneath this show of erudition and borrowed pomp there is a fragile, commonplace thesis: essentially it is another version of the classic apology for an elite. In the manner of Spengler, the rationalization of a prejudice is elevated into a theory of history, and the prejudice itself becomes a principle of action.

Dr. Arendt's thesis is built around a trilogy of terms: "Labor," "Work," and "Action." It is hard to know as the argument proceeds whether these are meant to be historical stages in man's development or logical categories, for Dr. Arendt, in the familiar Hegelian fashion, treats them interchangeably. In any case they are meant to explain events.

Man began with a life of labor, she tells us, the life of bare survival. In labor man preserves his primary and elemental being, his "oneness with nature." This is succeeded by the life of work, in which man makes stable things and in doing so isolates himself from nature and, as it were, fabricates a wall between himself and it. In both of these relations—to nature and to objects—man has not yet fully become himself. It is only through the life of action, through the relations of our social life, when, through language, man interacts with man (here one detects an echo of Jean-Paul Sartre), that we become what we are meant to be: beings no longer bound to the ceaseless cycles of nature; and only then do we achieve the ultimate separation from nature and the ultimate freedom of contemplation.

But this happy evolution has been disrupted by the advent of modern science, according to Dr. Arendt. Galileo's introduction of the "instrument" into science began the destruction of the ideal of truth as contemplation, detached from all involvement with the workings of nature. The use of scientific instruments is seen as representing a return to the primal involvement with nature. (Is there no difference between the astronomer's use of the telescope and the laborer's use of the shovel?) Like the laboring process itself, both science and technology, which is treated as its identical twin, have become "processes" without "end" or meaning. With the full development of modern scientific technique work is reconverted into labor; and the technician job-holders of today come to correspond to the slaves of antiquity.

THE name "science" is so often used today, in politics, advertising, and the public fantasies of the mass media, to represent a mysterious activity inspiring fear, reverence, or reproach, that Dr. Arendt's usage is immediately recognizable. But to lump together the diversity of approaches, techniques, and kinds of concept formation in scientific inquiry with the whole of modern technology and the machine civilization is unworthy of a treatise which surely intends to be sophisticated. Equally unsophisticated is Dr. Arendt's way of treating the word "process" as if it had a single, unambiguous meaning—as though the "process" of changing one's mind and the "process" of turning water into ice are instances of a single phenomenon.

This kind of reasoning is used lightly in parlor games and nonsense poetry, rather more seriously at literary cocktail parties, and far too solemnly in the new university paper-back illiteracy. Verbal identities do not necessarily point to identities in the world. By grouping human functions under broad labels, such as "labor" and "work," it is possible to build any number of plausible, if ultimately vacuous, descriptive schemes. And even assuming that these abstractions stand for real and independent functions, it does not follow that the life of man could be compressed into one of them completely.

Furthermore, it does not appear that the three main abstractions, "labor," "work," and "action," do stand for clearly separable activities. Work differs from labor and is a higher human activity, Dr. Arendt says, in that its products survive and create a stable world for man: thereby he realizes his separateness from ever-consuming nature. Is writing for a newspaper, then, or being a surgeon, labor or work? If the distinction between labor and work is to be based on whether their products endure or not, there are any number of cases where the distinction does not apply. If it does not

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apply, of what use is the distinction in the first place?

In another effort to distinguish between these two activities, Dr. Arendt tells us that the products of "labor" never quite lose their natural characteristics. Does she mean that bread looks like wheat and that we would recognize its wheaten quality if we were not told what it is made from? In contrast to the products of labor, she says, the products of "work" are unrecognizable; the natural material is violently transformed. Just because steel is not recognizably iron ore, are we then forced to say that the stone in a marble statue is not the less plainly stone?

Aside from their duties as rhetorical devices, these distinctions serve no concrete purpose and no valid argument can proceed from them. But then Dr. Arendt's method of developing them is not a logic but rather a kind of willful series of associations. The sonorous reverberations of these associations are mistaken for meaning. Some are merely metaphors in reverse; when examined closely they break into two or more non-congruous meanings. For example: "The only character of the world by which to gauge its reality is in its being common to us all and common sense occupies such a high rank in the hierarchy of political qualities because it is the one sense that fits into reality as a whole our five strictly individual senses and the strictly particular data they perceive. It is by virtue of common sense that the other sense perceptions are known to disclose reality and are not merely felt as irritations of our nerves or resistance sensations of our bodies. A noticeable decrease in common sense in any given community and a noticeable increase in superstition and gullibility are therefore almost infallible signs of alienation from the world."

This is only one of the ambitious constructions built upon elementary mistakes; it mixes two altogether different senses of "common sense." One reference is to the internal synthesis of the five physical senses; the other is to that ordinary usage of the term which refers to the recognition of everyday or approved truths. To use this hodgepodge in order to argue, as Dr. Arendt does, that a decrease in common sense in any community represents an alienation from the world is the same as if one were to argue that the growth of a cataract meant the loss of poetic vision, or conversely, that the loss of poetic vision would mean the growth of a cataract.

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All of Dr. Arendt's conclusions can be traced to such verbal muddles. The argument that modern man is returning to the laboring state is based upon the notion that science is a form of process and that we are now dominated by processes without ends or end. Here she confuses several meanings of "end." End can mean stopping point, or it can mean the function served by an instrument, or it can mean the purpose or sense of an activity or process, as the comprehension of a poem is the end of the process of reading it. And in this last sense process need not be a meaningless and endless series of changes, but can

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mean a definite kind of action with a character or form of its own. Her notion of science as a series of processes without end or ends is no less fallacious than the idea that a composer's life is a process without meaning or end simply because it continues to issue in more than one piece of music. By failing to discriminate these several senses of end, Dr. Arendt's round assertions about "science" as "process" have only an apparent cogency.

The treatment of "action" is even more confusing. "Action" in the sense of the response of one person to another is identified with action in the special sense of the person being an individual and making his own history. In what sense do these two belong together? What have they in common? Dr. Arendt goes on to say that actions begin but never end. Granted that consequences we do not envisage follow endlessly on action, this does not mean that actions do not result in consequences that we do intend, or that we are necessarily guilty for the unintended consequences of actions.

By way of these uncertain bridges, Dr. Arendt advances into the realm of society and government. The life of action (of which Greek political life was the purest historical illustration), she says, needs to be revived and strengthened. Man finds himself in action, that is to say, in social relations to others. Men respond to each other and in this mutual response their genuine individuality is brought forth.

Dr. Arendt makes a half-truth into an absolute. It is true, as she says, that others see us in many ways better than we see ourselves; but social life conceals as much as it exhibits. Her discussion of goodness reveals the contradictions in her argument. Goodness, she says, is secret and unknowable even to its possessor and if once exhibited is no longer goodness. She never explains why; nor does she make clear what sense of "goodness" she has in mind. Presumably she means humility, but goodness as public or private achievement, for example, and goodness as a state of character or as an appropriate emotion, are surely rather different. In any case, Dr. Arendt claims simultaneously that social life brings out or creates our true selves; that the goodness which is the essential part of the self cannot be made public and must wither upon exposure; and that it is the observer who really knows the self. All three of these statements cannot be true.

Like so many other contemporary discussions of man and his place in the world, *The Human Condition* cannot be dealt with seriously as argument. Its principles and avowed assumptions are so many disguises for emotional responses asserted as truths. To reject modern technology on the ground of moral disapproval is as futile as blaming Prometheus for bringing down fire. Why should Sputnik be any more the end or beginning of things than the bow and arrow? How we deal with machines may not be clear, but surely we are not going to be helped much by emotive responses such as pessimism parading as objective analysis.

This attitude of cultural pessimism has been institutionalized almost as an academy of contemporary thought: more intolerant, ingrown, doctrinaire, and reactionary in many ways than the classic academies ever were. The public mask of this attitude is a despairing rejection of the world which is in fact a cover for snobbery, false gentility, and pseudo-learning. Though in Dr. Arendt's case, the style is German-pontifical, it is an attitude at least as old and as comic, no matter how dressed-up, as Moliere's learned ladies.

We see it in the trite, conventional response to the first sight of Levittown, "Horrors!" But an appalling stew of a slum in Naples?—"Ah, the remains of a glorious old culture!" One can imagine one of these snubbing William Blake, "poor illiterate mass-man, what good can come of him?"

It is evident that Dr. Arendt, with her nostalgia for a golden Greek past (that never was) and a select few (that never are) and her rejection of contemporary mass society, is very much in this line. Daring? Unconventional? New? As a matter of fact, as safe and conformist as Babbitt at a banquet. Dr. Arendt gives us a Sunday-supplement apocalypse; why should its tremors linger past breakfast?

Stories from South Africa

THE ZULU AND THE ZEIDE. By DAN JACOBSON. Atlantic-Little Brown. 247 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by IRVING FELDMAN

THIS collection of Dan Jacobson's short stories provides a valuable and illuminating addition to the three novels he has already published. A number of these stories are excellent in them-

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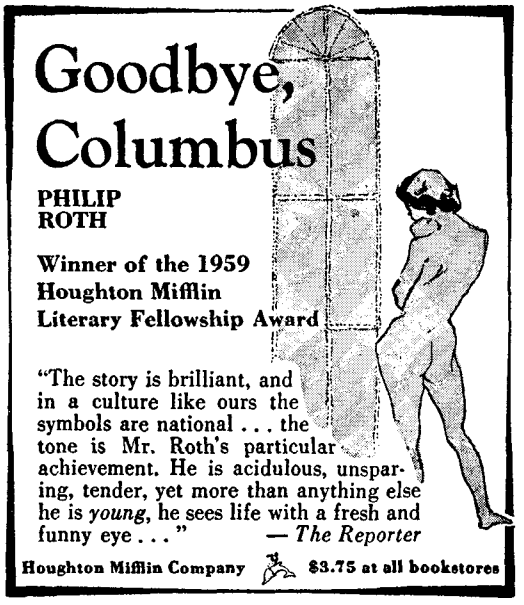
selves, written with the same suppleness, economy, and intelligence as *The Price of Diamonds,* the last and best of Mr. Jacobson's novels. Because they rehearse in its barest form and with almost obsessive persistence the central theme of the novels, they permit a clearer understanding of what the uncertainty and the Gothic detail of *A Dance in the Sun* and the comedy of *The Price of Diamonds* may have hidden. Finally, the very density of effort to be seen in these stories lends a new impressiveness to the whole of Mr. Jacobson's work.

Readers of COMMENTARY, where some of these stories have appeared,* are no doubt already familiar with the technical virtues of Mr. Jacobson's writing: his clear, easy, and firm prose, his deft control of tone, his variety and inventiveness, his refusal to linger over a passage for the sake of making merely local effect. Mr. Jacobson is a master of the ironic style, but he is no mere craftsman and his ironies never presume to become answers. Although Mr. Jacobson's ironic style is not yet a vision of life, it is nevertheless addressed, in a surprising way, to the contemporary problem of liberal's guilt. I say "surprising" because, at first glance, Mr. Jacobson's might easily be mistaken for that nervous, pitiful, and modish irony that undertakes to lay bare the half-lies, compromises of principle, and guilt involved in being a man of good will—only to end by approving, rigidifying, sentimentalizing this very guilt. Mr. Jacobson's irony, and frequently his subject-matter, does spring from the equivocal position of liberal and humane Jews who must take (and even make) their place in the South African pecking order, but its goal is, precisely, the exorcism of guilt: an exorcism which is to be brought about not by expiation and sacrifice but by lucidity and generosity of mind. For, his stories would seem to argue, guilt blinds and distorts the guilty man; he can properly help neither the suffering nor himself.

All this may perhaps be most clearly seen in the ironic reversals and discoveries which inevitably form the climax of Mr. Jacobson's stories and novels. These have, almost without exception, a common content: the victim is seen to be more powerful than his master, or (what comes to the same thing) has purposes of his own beyond what the master's brutality or guilt

* "After the Riot," July 1958; "The Thief," June 1956 ("Stop, Thief!" in the present volume); and "The Box," June 1953.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can imagine. This vision takes its simplest form in what might be called the mute victim, the man whose passivity, defenselessness, inertness binds the violent and the guilty to him: the unconscious Fink of *The Price of Diamonds*, the inert drunk who is the hero of "The Burden," the passively resisting secretary of "The Boss," the hunted stembuck of "The Game," the captured, trembling, young Kaffir thief of "Stop, Thief!," the gentle, unspeaking Zulu of the title story of this volume, the profoundly apathetic hero of "The Stranger."

In the more complex form the victim is active and some recognition of his power is made within the story. The Kaffir Joseph of *A Dance in the Sun* plays for his own ends on the guilt and idealism of the two white youths; the masochist of "The Antipodes" announces to her brutal lover that he has been the mere instrument of her masochism; the Jewish hotelkeeper of "Droit de Seigneur" informs the anti-Semitic Polish Counts that he has been giving them preferred treatment at his fifth-rate hotel only in order to mock them. And so on.

In "The Antipodes" and "The Boss," a figure appears who manages the unfolding relations between victim and predator. In "The Antipodes," the Australian, Sturgess, seems to be *the* Jacobson ironic hero: removed but engaged, softly childish and yet wise, passive but powerful, victorious because he seems to lose. Unfortunately, though perhaps significantly, Mr. Jacobson's ironic art seems to have deserted him in both these stories. "The Boss" is a rather predictable morality, and "The Antipodes" tends to soap-opera—its recognitions are far too pat, and the dialogue floats above the action as the balloons do above a comic-strip.

It ought to be clear, now, that the novel *The Price of Diamonds* is a comic version of this theme. For here, the figure of the unconscious Fink moves Gottlieb, his partner, to wish to confess having deceived him, a deception which Gottlieb thinks has led to a nearly-fatal attack on Fink. But, it turns out, that attack had no connection with Gottlieb's deception, and Fink moreover has himself been deceiving Gottlieb. The partners are thus mutually deceiving, self-deceiving, and mutually deceived in their guilt. In all Mr. Jacobson's comic jugglery of the plot, the guilt has been made away with.

These little summaries may suggest not only the stubbornness with which Mr. Jacobson wrestles with the demon of guilt but also the therapeutic quality of his irony. For his irony is a method of interrupting the vicious cycle that leads from helpless idealism to guilt to an exaggerated awareness of the victim and, finally, to a more profound helplessness. He insists on showing how the victim, in the very midst of his suffering, does not become the puppet of either his misery or his master but remains something more—a human being. And the fineness of Mr. Jacobson's art, of his moral sense, lies in his refusal to allow his preoccupation with attitudes toward the victim to harden into an indifference to the victim himself. In his work, brutality, guilt, sentimentality are seen to be equally stultifications of the spirit.

One does, however, leave Mr. Jacobson's work with the lingering feeling that he has yet to exhaust the possibilities of his subject. These stories show him to be tenaciously working its center, but the peripheries remain untouched. I have in mind the two things that seem to haunt the edges of his work and which he treats only partially or elliptically: the violence that glares from South African society and the South African landscape, and the Negro victim himself. It may seem too Dostoyevskian a program, but by undertaking full-scale "inward" studies of these subjects he might finally be able to lay the ghost of guilt.

If the seriousness with which I hope I have discussed Mr. Jacobson's themes and intentions is not tribute enough, let me only add that while reading some of these stories I sometimes had the wish they would not end. And that experience is rare.

Wiping the Slate Clean

THE TRADITION OF THE NEW. By HAROLD ROSENBERG. Horizon Press. 285 pp. $4.95.

Reviewed by FRANCIS GOLFFING

HAROLD ROSENBERG's reputation among the intelligentsia—hitherto based on his trenchant magazine articles only—may not need the support of this book, which presents the best of those same articles grouped under plausible headings and supported with a programmatic introduction. If we rejoice in the occasion, it is because now Rosenberg's ideas stand a good chance of reaching an audience both wider and different from the one he has been in the habit of addressing (not entirely from choice, I am sure). Being essays dealing with

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large public issues they should be read, and responded to, by the public at large.

The book falls into four main divisions: "American Painting Today," "The Profession of Poetry," "War of Phantoms" (pieces concerned with Marxist methods and issues, plus an excellent study of dramatic conversion patterns), "The Herd of Independent Minds" (pieces concerned with mass culture and problems raised by our managerial society). Its central theme is self-transformation and transformation of others, and these symbolic actions are set over against the numberless accommodation formulas devised by a society which insists, inexorably, on the individual's conformity to the *status quo ante*. The old in the guise of the old being largely discredited today, Rosenberg concentrates on the more insidious—and more fashionable—alternative: the glitter of novelty playing about the surfaces of decay and obsolescence, sheep instinct strutting about in lone wolf's clothing. He spends a great deal of energy on the exposure of this fraud, whether it happens to take place in art, in ideology or—all but unconsciously—in the operations of our social machinery; stokes the fires, tirelessly, on behalf of a humanity which he conceives in terms of maximum breadth and discusses with a minimum of sloganizing or other political clap-trap. The strenuous, coaldust-stained countenance of his style bears witness to his commitment, and one gladly forgets his occasional arrogance (we are daily tortured with humility, both true and mock) and his brassy approach to matters that could be handled with greater discretion. Rosenberg has all the requisites of the first-rate pamphleteer: conviction, raw indignation, a cutting edge. It is good to hear him blurt out his discontents so passionately and, at the same time, so shrewdly, against the daily din set up by bland world-reformers, nervous *status quo*-ists, and brutal spokesmen for ideological repression.

As a writer, Rosenberg is hard-hitting and acute rather than subtle, very good at seeing things contextually and synoptically, and (like all anti-ideological ideologists) as impatient of the purely factual as he is of the superstructures. His literary method is a supple and in the main reliable vehicle for his ideas, though at times the two can be remarkably at odds: he will present a substantial notion in a brusque, rough-and-ready manner, or a highly dubious one with great precision of phrase and an exquisite sense of nuance, and think nothing of it. His famous piece on the American action painters well illustrates the second failing; his piece, "Pop Culture: Kitsch Criticism," the first. In the essay on American painting, art as *métier* is discounted to be re-established as symbolic action: the painter's increase in perception and moral judgment—in realized identity, in short—which has traditionally been regarded as a by-product of the successful art work now comes to be viewed as the artist's principal aim, while the work itself is reduced to the role of an auxiliary, or catalytic agent, in the process of self-transformation. Rosenberg argues his case brilliantly, and his formulations are not only apt but often very moving; all the same, the position is unsound, a queer compound, and consequent garbling, of Dewey and the Aristotelian notions of *praxis* and *catharsis;* and by setting up psychological change as an ultimate—the supreme sanction of both the artist and the work—Rosenberg drops one half of a dialectic which is essential to the human condition and which, for better or worse, will continue to be so. This piece is certainly more than an *ex post facto* justification of Abstract Expressionism, New York

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variety; more than a convenient credo provided by an expert in words for men excelling in a different branch of art. Rosenberg is too honest to sink himself into the role of impresario: he doubtless speaks on his own behalf as well as on behalf of his friends. Yet what he says adds nothing new to our understanding of the artist's particular *agon,* or agony; tells us nothing new about the character of aesthetic judgment (except, perhaps, that it should be suspended, or else measure art in units of psychic intensity, ardor of conflict). The old "man vs. work" dialectic remains exactly where it was before Rosenberg set to drafting his manifesto.

Conversely, the article on kitsch and kitsch criticism rests on a searching, unpopular perception: that recent sociological interest in the mechanics and imagery of comic strips, cheap movies, etc. has helped to abet these disorders, under the guise of studying them dispassionately and drawing "valid" conclusions from them. (Whether this collusion is deliberate or involuntary does not matter here.) Intellectual curiosity, Rosenberg argues, is constantly being diverted from its proper subject (authentic art) into areas where a low-grade symbolism proliferates endlessly and unrewardingly: while the zone in which serious art can still be practiced and absorbed grows more strait by the hour, thousands of men are examining with Pangloss-like profundity the futile creations of our entertainment industry. Rosenberg's case is entirely solid, but his writing—compared with, say, similar studies by T. W. Adorno—seems sketchy, short of breath, even a trifle sloppy. The piece might stand as a series of independent propositions, thrown out in the heat of disgust; but in that case Rosenberg should have clearly presented it as such, rather than in the semblance of a close-knit argument.

"All men dream," T. E. Lawrence once wrote, "but not equally." Rosenberg's dream is one of continuous nightmare, not of fruition or resurrection; and it is that dream which carries conviction, rather than his daylight speculations on metamorphosis and transcendence. But what arrests us even more than the quality of the dream is the dream quality of the writing, with its curious distortions of scale and shape, its frantically quickened pace, its fantastic (and yet perfectly "reasonable") demands on life as it is actually lived. "The dream of Reason begets monsters." Or, better, phantasmagories. The reader is admitted to an utopia stripped of every positive determination except that subjective thirst which, at the outset, envisioned its possibility. Yet these are hard times—both hard and overstuffed, bursting with positiveness and positions. We should be grateful for possibilities such as this, even though what it represents is a *Leerform*—a scheme without a content; even though the atmosphere which supports it is nothing but windy gloom.

Homage to a Critic

SHMUEL NIGER BUCH (S. NIGER MEMORIAL VOLUME). Edited by SHLOMO BICKEL and LEIBUSH LEHRER. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. 333 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by ISRAEL KNOX

SAMUEL Niger, the noted Yiddish literary critic who died in 1955 at the age of seventy-two, began to write in the early years of the century, when Mendele, Peretz, and Sholem Aleichem were still alive, and modern Yiddish literature was just entering its most fruitful period. Niger's career was almost identical with the growth of modern Yiddish literature itself, and he was one of its shapers and moving spirits. No other critic, with the possible exception of Baal Machshoves, even approximated him in stature and accomplishment, and Baal Machshoves, whose output was slim by comparison with that of Niger, died in 1924 (at the age of fifty-one) before he had a chance to deal comprehensively with such writers as Asch, Leivick, and Menachem.

Niger's explanation of his function as critic was simple. He described himself as a discerning and thoughtful reader whose task was to help other readers get as much meaning out of a book as possible. By defining the relationship between critic and book as parallel to that between author and "life," however, Niger lifted this humble view of criticism to considerable heights. He assigned to the critic not only a mediating but a creative role—for whom a book is a vehicle for confronting the very substance of human experience. In practice, as working critic, Niger fused both methods, examining a book (or author) scrupulously for its content, for its aesthetic merit, for its psychological and social dimensions, while making the exegetical task also an occasion for expressing his own ideas.

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Yet, there were historical reasons for the type of criticism Niger wrote and for his particular idea of the critic's function. The concept of literature as *belles-lettres* was fresh to the East European Jew. Not that literature was absent from his heritage: there was much poetry in his Bible and some in his prayers, and there were innumerable parables and stories in the *Midrashim* and the *Agada*. But for the Jew these too were *Torah*, and hence were for learning, for guidance, for spiritual and intellectual *tachlis*, purpose. The Jew always distinguished between the secular book and the *sefer*. The book was for amusement, but the *sefer* was for study, for getting a little closer to the heart of the Torah—the divine law as a program of conduct and as an experiment in holiness.

For the generations that turned from the *yeshiva* and the Talmud to Socialism, Zionism, and secular culture, there could be no enduring satisfaction in merely perusing the pages of a book. The Yiddish reader had to linger over a book, immerse himself in it, discuss it with his friends as earnestly as he did a while ago a passage in the Talmud. He cherished the book of stories or poems as a *sefer*, as possessing an element of sanctity, as an organ of truth. The *maskilim* (as proponents of the "Enlightenment") generally judged literature in terms of its didactic effectiveness, but it was Niger's great merit to have treated the Yiddish book as *sefer* without compromising it as literature. He raised literature to the status of a *sefer* by seeking out the *tachlis*, the purpose and meaning of the book, thereby proposing that the novel or poem is *sefer* to the extent to which it is authentic literature.

Niger had no peer as a publicist but he did not handle issues journalistically, or according to the dominant ideology or mood of the day. He was, for example, never dazzled by the promise which the Soviet Union held out for the flowering of Yiddish; and when the notion of "proletarian literature" entranced even those who were remote from Communism, he rejected it. Again, Niger was among the very few who appraised the establishment of the State of Israel correctly—not as the solution of a problem but rather as a crisis of fulfillment. He sensed the ethical danger confronting Israel and perhaps even more the Diaspora (in its attitude toward Israel)—the danger of accommodation to the idolatries of the world, the temptation to fashion itself in the image of the nations *as they are*. Niger was no sentimentalist, but he was troubled by the Israeli pride in military victory as such, by the acceptance of violence as normal and natural, by the blurring of the boundary between "national" and "nationalistic." And in opposition to Ben-Gurion's doctrine of *kibbutz galuyot*, the ingathering of the exile, he developed and defended the concept of what might be called *hiyuv ha-galut*, the obligation of the exile: the obligation for Jewish creativity wherever we dwell and for involvement in the larger community—country and humanity—of which we are also a part.

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THIS commemorative volume contains sixteen essays—scholarly, informative, and, in varying degrees, interesting. Unfortunately, only four (a total of thirty-five pages) deal with Niger—either with his biography or with his work—and these are among the least adequate in the book. Three articles may be subsumed under the rubric of Yiddish literature, but they are in a minor key; there are no contributions whose theme is Yiddish literature and its values in the generic sense, or whose subject is the craft of criticism as a literary genre and as a discipline. The book is almost exclusively preoccupied with some phase of Yiddish as a language or with some sociological or historical aspect of Jewish nationalism.

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The most exciting piece in the volume is Yudel Mark's "Yiddish-Hebrew and Hebrew-Yiddish Coinages." Mark's thesis—sustained by examples and documentation—is that Yiddish and Hebrew were not two disparate languages throughout the centuries in Eastern Europe but constituted a single medium of Jewish thought and feeling. They were two only as "husband and wife" are two, bound together by "a partnership in destiny." It was not merely a process of borrowing from each other. Yiddish not only absorbed a multitude of Hebrew words, phrases, and sayings through the Tanach, Mishna, Gemara, and the Midrashim, but devised countless Hebrew words, phrases, and sayings as an integral part of Yiddish speech. These had not existed in Hebrew, and their source was not in the Bible or Talmud, but in the daily life of the home, the market-place, and the synagogue. It follows then that Yiddish is no step-child of Jewish history, and that knowledge of it is indispensable both to the student of secular and rabbinic Hebrew as well as to the student of the East European Jewish milieu.

Leibush Lehrer's "Problems of Jewish Ethnic Character" studies the changes in the Jewish character in America as compared with what it was in Eastern Europe. These changes are measured by three criteria: the type of men chosen as our ideal, the "frame-of-reference" of our religious practices, and the use we make of our leisure. First, there has been a shift from the preeminence of the *talmid hakham* (the man of learning), the *tzadik* (the pious and good man), even the martyr—to the "professional" (as administrator of Jewish institutions) and the businessman (as holder of authority). Second, our religious practices are not rooted in a *nusach*, a style of life, but are a medley of customs within the context of semi-dramatic ritual. Finally, our leisure does not serve us as the occasion for *aliyat neshama* (elevation of the soul) as the Sabbath did, but for the hedonism of food, comfort, and easy entertainment. To modify this alteration in the Jewish character Lehrer proposes a deepening of our "historical orientation."

Besides Mark's excellent essay, there are two others on Yiddish linguistics—Shlomo Noble's "Yiddish in the Garb of Hebrew," which is a variation on the same *motif* and supplements Mark's article; and Max Weinreich's "Yiddish Phonology as a Clue to Medieval Hebrew," which is an admirable analysis of an extremely specialized and technical matter, but is out of place in this volume. Four articles are historical, and of these Philip Friedman's "Ukranian-Jewish Relations During the Nazi Occupation" is stirring through the sheer recital of facts. Finally, besides Lehrer's study, there is a piece by Chaim Wolf Reines, "Modern Jewish Nationalism," in which he summarizes the works of Krochmal, Hess, Pinsker, Herzl, Achad Ha-am, Dubnow, and others, and concludes that the nationalism of Western European Jewish thinkers had its roots in our ethical and religious tradition while the inspiration of Jewish nationist thought in Eastern Europe was fundamentally secularist. There is one article on Anglo-Jewish literature by Charles Angoff, but it is sketchy, loosely organized, and altogether naive. Angoff ascribes the presumed improvement in the Jewish content of Anglo-Jewish writing to the beneficent influences of Ludwig Lewisohn, Louis D. Brandeis, and, as one might guess, the establishment of the State of Israel.

This is on the whole a solid volume, and no dishonor to the memory of Niger. But it is more representative, I think, of the interests and mentality of Yivo than of Niger. The pieces about Niger do not do justice to his vast importance in Yiddish literature. And almost all the articles are sedate in tone and content, as though their authors (or the editors) were anxious to leave undisturbed the era of good feeling which seems to have descended upon the Jewish community. Not so long ago the Yiddish-speaking segment of our community did not shy away from controversy and sharp divergences of opinion, either as polemic or as painstaking examination of ideas. Niger himself was skilled and fearless in both sorts of controversy. With the establishment of the State of Israel—and perhaps also because of the sacred martyrdom of the six million in Europe—controversy has been largely muted, and keen discussion is now conducted only *within* certain premises; there is, regrettably, scant questioning of the premises themselves.

A Witch Doctor's Tale

LOATHSOME WOMEN. By LEOPOLD STEIN, M.D., with Martha Alexander. McGraw Hill. 243 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by RUTH DALIN

WRITTEN by a Jungian psychoanalyst, *Loathsome Women* is a book about four witches. That the author, Dr. Leopold Stein (former chairman of the British Society of Analytical

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Psychology, and assistant editor of the *Journal of Analytical Psychology*) found the time and interest for research into witchcraft and witchlore is admirable enough. But when he merges his professional skills with his hobby—"I was now earnestly pursuing my study of the possible relationship between witches and these four patients"—a book is born. (A collaborator, Martha Alexander, presumably did the actual writing.)

As Dr. Stein points out, each generation had its witches, and each its method of dealing with them. We now scoff at such obsolete apparatus as cauldrons, stakes, and vulgar fireworks. The modern witch, sensitive and intellectual as she is, requires more refined treatment. Today her exorcisement is known as psychoanalysis.

The four women who come to Dr. Stein's sanctum represent different species of "witches." Sybil is the "enchantress" type, beautiful and seductive. Her chief difficulty is sleeplessness. By her wiles she has driven her husband to drink. Daphne is sweet, but has "pointed white teeth." She is a "spider," who renders her married lover weak and helpess. Judith is concerned about her husband, who refuses to see her. He is in a sanitorium suffering a nervous breakdown, and a functional blindness. Can Judith's husband be helped? Only through *her* analysis, answers Dr. Stein, and the "hag" type witch becomes patient number three. Dora is a vegetarian (a defense against her desire to chop people up). She is the whimpering "crone." She can stay only within a circumscribed area of her home, and is afraid to venture forth. Some time ago her husband died, like a child, in her arms.

Having met his patients, Dr. Stein sets about describing how he cured them—a truly herculean task, as he seems to have experienced it. "These women led me on many dark and devious paths before my association with them ended, and the same forces which threatened them came to threaten me."

Sigmund Freud might have been appalled at the prospect of treating such horrendous women, but Dr. Stein is undaunted. At times his witches (a word he reiterates *ad nauseam*) very nearly get the better of him. "She reminded me of the Sphinx, that enigmatic creature, who posed baffling questions, the lion with the head of a woman. I remembered that those who could not answer this creature's riddle died. I took this as a warning." The

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story proceeds like an old-fashioned movie, with the analyst appearing to be in constant danger, but remaining, nevertheless, the master of his emotions. "I had been in similar situations before, and I was sure that as long as I remained aware of what was going on, my patient was unlikely to strike me. Yet I was assailed by a fear so strong, that for a moment I was literally frozen with horror."

Finally, Dr. Stein enters the realm of the supernatural. As he strains the reader's credulity, one almost hopes, for the analyst's sake, that he is writing with tongue in cheek: "the smeared mouth and the stained teeth . . . reminded me of blood—of a vampire bloated with blood after a feast." In his inexorable witchhunt, he cites such symptoms as an inability on the part of his distressed women to shed tears, or their propensity to perform magic. One of his ladies, for example, who had wished that her lover's wife might die, "had, it seemed, almost destroyed the wife of her lover." By using the same methods, and in fact, the same patients, Dr. Stein could just as well have proved that there are fairies or angels.

It is interesting, if not surprising, to note that the husbands and lovers of *Loathsome Women* cannot be accounted responsible in their relationships. Seemingly nothing more than innocent victims of the "witches," they are always under their evil influences or "spells." Hence, as the analyst's patients achieve a cure, the men with whom they are allied, responding like parasites, gain full maturity. Sybil's husband stops drinking as she gains insight into her problems. Their relationship grows stronger. As Daphne gets ready to relinquish her lover, he returns to his wife, a better man for all of that. Through her analysis, Judith learns that "left" represents her unconscious, and "right" her full consciousness. Her husband slowly recovers some use of his right eye. Later he asks to see her, and there is a touching reunion. Dora comes to understand her cannibalistic guilt and fears of death. She knows too, that she once enjoyed the sexual power she had over her dying husband. At last she is able to walk about freely. "'I can pass the butcher now,' she informed me, 'and I can go in too. I've even become quite friendly with the butcher's boy.'"

In surveying the recent spate of case histories, written to titillate if not edify its readers, it would seem that the biggest troublemakers are women—Ashley Montagu notwithstanding. Now Dr. Stein puts his contribution on the market, pandering to the popular taste for such literature with a hard sell that goes far beyond the bounds of scientific truth. His book is a mockery of the entire psychoanalytic movement.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Joel Blocker, a young American writer and editor, recently returned after three years in Israel, where he wrote for the Jerusalem *Post*.

Lincoln Reis is chairman of the department of philosophy at Long Island University. His review of Bertrand Russell's *Portraits from Memory* appeared in our August 1957 number.

Irving Feldman teaches English at Kenyon College. His poem, "From the Wandering Jew," was published in our May issue.

Francis Golffing, a frequent contributor of verse as well as literary criticism, is a professor of English at Bennington College.

Israel Knox has written often for Commentary over the years. Associate professor of philosophy at New York University, he is also the author of a biography of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise.

Ruth Dalin is on the editorial staff of this magazine. This is her first published review.

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